FILM ACTIVISM IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA

Queer Autoethnography, Film Festival Politics, and the Subversion of Heteronormativity

Thesis

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the cultural phenomenon of film activism in the context of democratization and Islamization in post-Suharto Indonesia. Focusing on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) cultural producers, namely the organizers of Asia's largest queer film festival, the Q! Film Festival, and the directors of the collaborative film anthology *Anak-Anak Srikandi*, it aims to illuminate an aesthetic movement that has played an active part in the construction of the new Indonesian nation since the political reformation in 1998. The democratic opening in combination with the development of new media technologies made possible the emergence of marginalized voices that had been suppressed and dominated by the New Order regime. For the new liberal actors, cinema has played an important role in promoting novel understandings of sexuality and gender, raising awareness about controversial issues like homosexuality and individual sexual rights. However, the advancement of a liberal understanding of sexuality and sexual citizenship has met with strong opposition from both the government and Islamic groups, who produce and disseminate heterosexist and homophobic discourses based on invented "Islamic values."

Within the broader moral and political debates of the national public sphere, this study advances our understanding of how these LGBT middle-class cultural producers carve out their place in a rapidly changing Indonesian society. The homophobic protests of the Defenders of Islam Front (FPI) against the Q! Film Festival in 2010 showed the limits of the visibility politics of sexual and gender minorities. Although the realization of a queer counterpublic seems far from possible at this moment in time, the cultural activism explored here makes transformative politics imaginable. By demonstrating how film activists in contemporary Indonesia generate new forms of queer knowledge and enable community and alliance building based on affinity, I challenge and ask for the extension of existing notions of the political in LGBT rights activism. I argue that film activism creates inclusive critical sites of resistance where oppressive heteronormative discourses can be subverted and reconfigured in liberatory ways.

Drawing on anthropological fieldwork at the Q! Film Festival, interviews with key participants, close ethnographic analysis of *Anak-Anak Srikandi* and of my own involvement in the film's production, this work contributes to the study and practice of anthropological filmmaking, to the emerging field of film festival studies, and also to interdisciplinary studies of non-Western media. Furthermore, it counters anthropological

othering discourses and repositions the Indonesian cultural producers presented here as co-producers of knowledge. The findings offer insights into the workings of film activism and prompt consideration of the importance of listening and valuing voice.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Tidak ada Film Lesbian!

My first encounter with both the Indonesian independent film scene and the local lesbian gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community[1] occurred in August 2008, when I was a guest at the 7th Q! Film Festival (Q!FF) in Jakarta. I had been invited to the event by the then festival director John Badalu, a collegial gesture following the commencement of a partnership between our two festivals earlier that year. For our inaugural event in January 2008, John curated two Indonesian feature-length films and two short-film packages. It was the first time I had ever seen films from this predominantly Muslim Southeast Asian country. Indonesian cinema was largely unknown to most people in Germany, and many reacted with surprise when they learned that the archipelago once had one of the largest film industries in Asia.[2] Cinephiles might have heard of Garin Nugroho, the hitherto most famous Indonesian director, who made his international breakthrough at the Berlin International Film Festival, where in 1996 he won the FIPRESCI (Fédération Internationale de la Presse Cinématographique) award for his critically acclaimed feature *Bulan Tertusuk Ilalang* (And the Moon Dances, 1995). Garin Nugroho was a forerunner of the *Sinema Baru Indonesia* (New Indonesian Cinema), which marked the revival of the dormant film industry in post-New Order Indonesia.

The political reform (*Reformasi*) that started with Suharto's downfall in 1998 brought not only democracy but also new critical voices to the cultural and political landscape. It is these new voices, those of youth and rebellion in the form of film activism, that I am concerned with in this dissertation. John Badalu is certainly one of them, and it was he who introduced me to the thriving cultural scene in Jakarta. Through John I met fellow cultural workers, including filmmakers, actors, writers, theater people, and LGBT rights activists. This is where my Indonesian journey really started, in the alternative spaces (*ruang-ruang alternatif*) of a democratizing and Islamizing Indonesia.

I first came to Indonesia in my role as a film curator, my main task being to find new films for the next edition of my film festival, Asian Hot Shots Berlin. As the programmer of the Southeast Asian and queer film section, I was especially interested in

[1] In this dissertation, I use the terms "LGBT community" (as well as "LGBT people") as a provisional

[2] For in-depth accounts of the history of Indonesian cinema, see Said (1991) and Sen (1994).

finding Indonesian films that addressed topics related to gender and sexuality. The first thing I did when I arrived in Jakarta in 2008 was to study the Q!FF program brochure that one of the festival staff had given me at the airport. Sitting in the taxi on the way into the city center, I skimmed the program and immediately spotted the "Home Made" shorts. However, my enthusiasm for the local selection was slightly tamed when I realized that all the films were about same-sex male relationships. In fact, not one of the 18 selected Indonesian films dealt with the lives of "Indonesian lesbians." In the days that followed, I nevertheless happily watched all the Indonesian productions, pleased to see that gender issues, especially questions of women's rights, at least seemed to be of great interest to the local filmmakers.

One afternoon during the festival, in a break between two screenings, I went to the backyard of the Goethe Institute, which at that time served as the main festival venue, to get some fresh air. While sitting there I got involved in a conversation with what I thought to be a group of young Indonesian lesbians. We eagerly discussed the movie we just had watched and then exchanged program recommendations. Whilst I marked some new films in the festival brochure, I overheard one of the women saying to her friend in Indonesian, "*Tidak ada film lesbian*!" (There are no lesbian films!). I jumped right into the conversation and commented in English, "But there are some lesbian films, just no Indonesian ones." The two women looked at me and remarked synchronously, "Exactly!" It was this incident, I would later realize, that planted the seed of my PhD project.

It became apparent during our subsequent conversation that the women's main problem was not the foreign films per se, which they still enjoyed greatly, but rather that they could not relate to the stories and ways of being-in-the-world of the predominantly white middle-class lesbians therein. The bottom line was that they wanted to see more Indonesian stories that they could identify with—stories coming directly from within the "lesbian world" (*dunia lesbian*). When I said goodbye to the group, I jokingly asked them why they were not making their own films. They just laughed at my question.

This encounter stuck with me for the rest of my stay. Only when I was back in Berlin did I hit on the idea of organizing a filmmaking workshop in Jakarta that ideally would result in a film by, about, and for Indonesian lesbians. It took another two years until the idea was actualized and the work for the film anthology *Anak-Anak Srikandi* (Children of Srikandi) could begin. Since I was about to start graduate school for my doctoral degree at the University of Zurich, I decided for the sake of feasibility to turn this film project into my

PhD research. I was convinced that my experience as a film practitioner in combination with my academic background would make a fine practice-based research topic. Accordingly, I discuss the issues addressed in this dissertation not only from my perspective as an academic who works in audiovisual/media anthropology and in the field of gender and sexuality, but also from the standpoint of a cultural worker and activist who has spent many years organizing film festivals and making films outside of academia. I consider myself a filmmaker-researcher-activist, a hybrid subject who furthermore identifies herself as a queer-feminist. Certainly, my own bias regarding the Indonesian film scene and LGBT community appears very obvious in this dissertation, and throughout this work I will endeavor to point it out truthfully to the reader.

The decision to pursue practice-based research also comes from my academic commitment to a public anthropology. Following Borofsky (2000), I understand public anthropology as a publicly engaged anthropology, one that integrates theory and practice and presents anthropological knowledge to audiences outside of the academy (see also e.g. Lassiter 2005; Sanford & Angel-Ajani 2006). However, as Low and Merry (2010) argue, engagement in anthropology is manifested not only in public scholarship but also in a wide range of other practices. They distinguish a number of forms of engagement, ranging "from basic commitment to our informants, to sharing and support with the communities with which we work, to teaching and public education, to social critique in academic and public forums, to more commonly understood forms of engagement such as collaboration, advocacy, and activism" (ibid., 214). The way I wanted to realize an engaged anthropology was via collaborative filmmaking. The resulting co-authored and co-produced film, *Anak-Anak Srikandi*, can be seen as a form of an audiovisual public ethnography.

The collaborative ethnographic approach I utilized draws on the philosophical traditions of postcolonial studies,[3] postmodern and feminist theories, and French post-structuralism, particularly Michael Foucault's writings on power and domination, from which discussions about ethnographic authority and the call for more collaborations with "the people we study" originated in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. By far the most influential critique of anthropological practice was the "writing culture" debate that started in the late 1970s and culminated in two influential publications, namely James Clifford and George Marcus's (1986) edited volume *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* and

[3] For influential literature that critically addresses the complexity of cross-cultural representations, see Shohat snd Stam (1994), Rony (1996), Russel (1999), and Marks (2000).

George Marcus and Michael Fischer's (1986) *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*: *An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Since these two publications have been influential for my own critical anthropological practice, and because the issues in the aforementioned works are still very much relevant today, I will briefly revisit the debate and discuss what role it plays in current practices of ethnographic documentary.

The Crisis of Representation Revisited

The publication of *Writing Culture* (1986), which initially arose from a critique of the involvement of anthropology in colonialism,[4] was followed by a deep crisis of representation that led to the problematization of ethnographic authority, in particular the political, ethical, and aesthetic aspects of presenting fieldwork data, and more generally the relation between the subject and object in anthropological research. This new critical sensibility forced anthropologists to actively reflect on their descriptions of culture and to rethink the ethnographic representation of the "Other" and the unequal power relations involved. It was also the time to once and for all debunk the myth of scientific objectivity, that is, the illusion of the objectivity of ethnographic knowledge. In this regard, James Clifford (1986, 7) argued that all reality is constructed and that "ethnographic truths" are always "inherently *partial*." Accordingly, he views ethnographies as "true fictions."

As a result of the "writing culture" debate, anthropology experienced a *reflexive* and *literary turn*, leading to the deconstruction of literary and realist conventions in ethnography and encouraging experimentations with new modes of representation.[5] The postmodern approach produced reflexive, co-authored, polyphonic, multivocal, and dialogic forms of ethnography that sought to undermine the authoritative voice and monologist writing of the author/anthropologist (Clifford 1986, 15-17). The resultant "new ethnographies," as Lutkehaus and Cool (1999) have called them, were characterized by the positioning and inscription of the anthropologists in their written accounts, critically reflecting on their fieldwork experiences instead of feigning objectivism through the use of generalizing and detached scientific language.

The crisis of representation also took hold in the field of audiovisual anthropology. The history of ethnographic film was itself a history of "visual imperialism," which

[4] See Talal Asad (1973).
[5] See, for example, George E. Marcus (1994, 39), who has identified montage as "the cinematic basis of contemporary experiments in ethnographic writing."

Kuehnast (1992, 185) defines as "the colonization of the world mind through the use of selective imagery that acts as a representation of a dominant ideology or, as in many instances, a representation of the truth." The so-called "picturing culture" debate was spearheaded by film critic and theoretician Bill Nichols (1994) and filmmaker and literary theorist Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989), both of whom fiercely criticized the objectivization, devalorization, and silencing of the "Other" in ethnographic film.

Scholars of media anthropology Faye Ginsburg (1995a) and Jay Ruby (2000) have rightly pointed out that both critics ignored the fact that many ethnographic filmmakers were ahead of their time, having responded much earlier to the politics of representation in their ethical engagement with authority and authorship. Among these pioneers were Jean Rouch, Tim Asch, David and Judith MacDougall, John Marshall, Robert Gardner, Barbara Meyerhoff, Sol Worth, and John Adair. Jean Rouch is particularly deserving of credit here. He developed his groundbreaking participatory and reflexive methods as early as the 1950s in innovative films like *Les Maîtres Fous* (1955), *Moi, Un Noir* (1957), and *Jaguar* (1967), shot in West Africa, and *Chronique d'un Été* (1960), set in France, thus anticipating developments that did not enter mainstream anthropology until almost thirty years later. Aided by the introduction of synchronized sound recording in the 1960s, Rouch was also among the first filmmakers to forego voice-over narration, giving the subjects in his films the opportunity to speak for themselves.

The appearance of the first autonomous indigenous media productions in the early 1980s, which were developed largely in response to the introduction of satellite dishes and commercial television to indigenous communities, gave the issues at stake, such as power, voice, and authorship, yet another dimension (Ginsburg 1995b). As I will show in more detail in chapter three, this prompted even more ethnographic filmmakers to think about new modes of filmic representation, with many starting to use collaborative and participatory methods, working as co-producers with indigenous filmmakers and communities. In the course of more dialogic practices, the native voice underwent a reconceptualization and finally received acknowledgement in anthropology, providing "a natural pivot point for the transition from visual anthropology to media anthropology" in the 1980s and 1990s (Ginsburg et al. 2002, 4).[6]

[6] For comprehensive overviews of the subfield of media anthropology or the anthropology of media, see Askew and Wilk (2002), Ginsburg et al. (2002), Peterson (2003), and Rothenbuhler and Coman (2005).

Notwithstanding new developments in audiovisual and textual ethnographies, the crisis of representation is an issue that many anthropologists still grapple with today, as Rutten and colleagues (2013a, 629) have recently noted. Nowadays, however, as these authors further remark, most anthropologists are less concerned with the questions of who has the right to represent whom and what are the best ways to represent the "Other." Instead, they are interested in inter-subjective cultural practices (Kwon 2000) and "ethnography as an interactive encounter" (Rutten et al. 2013b, 465). What is more, anthropologists have increasingly appropriated artistic methodologies in their collaborative production of ethnographies. In fact, the approximation of anthropology and art is currently among the discipline's major interests (Grimshaw & Ravetz 2005; Schneider & Wright 2006, 2010, 2013; Schneider 2008; Ingold 2011; Köhn 2013; Rutten et al. 2013b). Efforts to overcome the limitations of conventional text-based modes of representation gained further momentum in the wake of the sensory turn in anthropology, which has established a new trend in sensory audiovisual anthropology in the past couple of years (Pink 2009; Nakamura 2013; Rutten et al. 2013b).

My own practice-based research is clearly influenced by both the critical insights of the crisis of representation and the discipline's shift toward more arts-oriented and collaborative audiovisual ethnographies. Having discussed the impact of the "writing culture" debate on anthropology, I now move on to describe the subject and scope of my research.

The Subject and Scope of this Practice-Based Work

This dissertation is about the cultural phenomenon of film activism in post-New Order Indonesia as performed by members of the urban LGBT community, a section of the population that is denied subject status and basic human rights. At the same time, it is also an account of the new Indonesian cinema and the alternative film scene, an area of activity that is only just beginning to be mapped (see e.g. Michalik & Coppens 2009; Thajib & Juliastuti 2009; Imanjaya 2010; van Heeren 2012; Michalik 2013; Murtagh 2013; Heryanto 2014). Indonesia's alternative film scene, which will be discussed in more depth in chapter two, is understood here as a loose aesthetic movement of young cultural workers, including directors, writers, producers, video activists, and curators, primarily in their early twenties to mid-thirties. I suggest that this new generation of filmmakers is part of a wider post-

New Order middle-class[7] cultural movement, one that is repositioning itself in relation to the state and civil society and is actively engaging in the redefinition of what it means to be Indonesian after the fall of Suharto's New Order regime. As will become clear over the course of this dissertation, sexuality is one of the main sites where contestation over the definition of the new Indonesian nation takes place.

The political reform opened up a democratic space for the proliferation of gay and lesbian identity politics, which was manifested in an increased number of cultural products dealing with alternative genders and sexualities and in widespread political organizing.[8] But calls for individual sexual rights and a legitimate place for self-expression in civil society have increasingly been met with widespread objections and outright homophobia by the state and Islamic groups. LGBT rights activists and secular women's rights organizations have promoted the notion of human rights and therewith a liberal understanding of sexuality and sexual citizenship, seeing alternative genders and sexualities as part of the new nation. The government, Muslim clerics, and Islamist groups have instead spread heterosexist discourses based on religious values, condemning homosexual behavior as sinful and immoral and thereby excluding LGBT people from full citizenship. These struggles are closely linked to contemporary discourses about the role of the state in the regulation of morality and sexuality, and about the position of Islam in both politics and the public sphere. The negotiation of sexual and moral citizenship not only redefines the relationship between the state and its citizen-subjects but also contributes to Indonesia's ongoing process of defining a new national identity (*kepribadian nasional*) after 32 years of authoritarian New Order rule.

It is in this context that I consider the film activism of the Q! Film Festival and the women directors of *Anak-Anak Srikandi* as "activist citizenship," which Engin Isin (2009, 368) identifies as a new mode of citizenship that focuses on the dynamic process of *becoming* a citizen and claimant of rights, as an alternative to the dominant and static concept of "active citizenship," a legacy from the French Revolution. Isin (2009, 368) looks at citizenship as a practice rather than as membership of a state, and consequently claims that

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[7] A number of scholars have highlighted the difficulties in identifying a singular middle class (*kelas menengah*) in Indonesia (see e.g. Tanter & Young 1990; Robison 1996a; Blackwood 2010, 13).

[8] Gay and lesbian organizations have been in existence in Indonesia since the 1980s (among these, GAYa Nusantara is the oldest existing and best known one; see also Qodari 2003), but as Boellstorff (2005, 299) has noted, it was not until the late 1990s that activist lesbian organizations were founded. See Wieringa (1999) for a history of the first lesbian organization in Jakarta.

> The rights (civil, political, social, sexual, ecological, cultural), sites (bodies, courts, streets, media, networks, borders), scales (urban, regional, national, transnational, international) and acts (voting, volunteering, blogging, protesting, resisting and organizing) through which subjects enact themselves (and others) as citizens need to be interpreted anew.

In my work I am interested in the ways young cultural producers "enact themselves as citizens." Like all ethnographic accounts, this one is necessarily partial. What I offer here—in written and filmic form—is by no means a comprehensive picture of either the "alternative film scene" or "lesbian life" in Indonesia. Instead, I present vignettes, autoethnographic and otherwise, of young activists who by means of cultural productions, like films and film festivals, are actively engaging in the construction of a new Indonesia.

I understand film activism as a specific form of cultural activism, one that is confined to cinematic media. Cultural activism remains an underexplored area of scholarship (see also Verson 2007; Buser et al. 2013). Theoretical discussions have primarily emerged in the subfield of media anthropology, where the concept was first introduced by Faye Ginsburg in her article *From Little Things, Big Things Grow: Indigenous Media and Cultural Activism* (1997). Focusing on the self-conscious deployment of media by Aboriginal communities in Australia, Ginsburg demonstrates how cultural activism is, on the one hand, an important means to sustain Aboriginal culture, and, on the other hand, a way to make claims for self-representation, governance, land rights, and cultural autonomy, factors that are of "vital significance in the construction of indigenous identity" (ibid., 121).

Given Ginsburg's influential work on indigenous media, the term cultural activism is now mainly attributed to this key arena within media anthropology. However, the strategic use of media for "counter hegemonic purposes" (Ginsburg et al. 2002, 7) by other minoritized subjects, such as people with HIV/AIDS (Juhasz 1995) or ethnic minorities (Riggins 1992; Alia & Bull 2006), has only occasionally been studied by social scientists. Surprisingly little anthropological research has been conducted on cultural activism among sexual and gender minorities; what scant scholarship there is has centered on North America and Europe (see e.g. Davidson 2007; Fotopoulou 2009). One is more likely to find accounts of queer cultural activism in neighboring disciplines like cinema and media studies (e.g. Russel 1999), performance and communication studies (e.g. Muñoz 1999; Rault 2011), and literary and cultural studies (e.g. Hallas 2009), as well as in the new interdisciplinary field of film festival studies (see, e.g., Loist & Zielinksi 2012; Loist 2013a). This is not to say that anthropologists studying gender and sexuality in Indonesia are ignoring media altogether in their ethnographies. Tom Boellstorff (2005, 2007), for

example, has studied the production and consumption of gay and lesbian zines and the role of the mass media in the formation of gay and lesbian subject positions.[9]

My work seeks to fill the theoretical and geographical lacunae in the existing research on cultural activism by analyzing the deployment of cinematic practices, in particular filmmaking and the organization of film festivals, by sexual and gender minorities in Indonesia as a means to question and counter heteronormativity and to present alternative ways of being-in-the-world. In this dissertation I will thus explore how minoritized sexual subjects engage in social criticism and articulate what George E. Marcus (1996) has called "the activist imaginary."

With respect to the critique of wide-ranging hegemonic constructions, my use of the term "film activism" is further influenced by media scholar Stephen Duncombe (2002), who in his edited book *Cultural Resistance Reader* defines culture as a tool for social change. The artistic practices discussed in the book, whether called political art, interventionist art, or activist art, are "used consciously or unconsciously, effectively or not, to resist and/or change the dominant political, economic and/or social structure" (ibid., 5).

By exploring activism that calls upon film to disrupt commonly held beliefs and essentialized notions of gender and sexuality, I aim to shed new light on cultural activism as a means for subversion. The conceptual framework I am proposing here allows for the analysis of the broader social, economic, political, and cultural contexts that both empower and constrain cultural producers in their attempts to enact citizenship through the activist use of film. It considers the social actors involved, the political objectives pursued, the particular forms of creative practices used, and the aesthetic product/performance/event created. For my analysis I make a conceptual distinction between *activist screen*[10] and *activist space*. Rather than writing a comprehensive ethnography of Indonesian cinema or the Indonesian film industry, in this dissertation I have chosen to illustrate film activism by means of two case studies.

The first case study, which I analyze under the heading "activist screen," concerns the co-authored documentary *Anak-Anak Srikandi* (2012), which I produced between 2010 and 2012 in collaboration with eight Indonesian women-who-love-women from Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Bandung, and the German filmmaker Angelika Levi. The multi-story film explores the lived experiences of these women and casts lights on different perspectives on

[9] See Boellstorff (2005) and Blackwood (2010) for comprehensive surveys of popular discourses related to gay and lesbian subjects in the Indonesian print media.
[10] For the concept of the "screen," see Kaja Silverman (1996, 195ff).

gender and sexuality from a group rarely heard in the Indonesian public sphere. Combining a cultural studies approach to media with the theory and practice of audiovisual anthropology, the film is theorized and analyzed as practice (Chapter 3), on the one hand, and as ethnography in its own right, on the other hand (Chapter 4) (see also Fischer 1995; Caton 1999).

By considering documentary not solely as an audiovisual ethnography but also as practice and social critique,[11] my work reflects a broader shift in how some scholars approach audiovisual media (see, e.g., Schatzki et al. 2001; Reckwitz 2002; Ortner 2006; Bräuchler & Postill 2010, 2012). Although media anthropologists have viewed media as social practice since as early as the 1980s (Ginsburg et al. 2002, 3), it is only now that media processes and visual methodologies are being properly theorized in visual studies. This is evidenced by Sarah Pink's (2012, 5f) proposal that "the emergence of visual methods and visual methodology [be treated] as a field of interdisciplinary scholarship and practice."

Within this new field of visual methodology I situate my film work in the strand of applied visual anthropology, which "specifically attends to the relationship between visual methods, social intervention and/or participatory research" (Pink 2012, 9; see also Pink 2004, 2006, 2007, 2011a; Mitchell 2011). Applied visual anthropology brings together scholarly and applied practices that potentially enable the "activist anthropologist" (Ginsburg et al. 2002, 8) to make critical interventions outside academia. Ideally, the endeavor of "going public" in order to "reveal the hidden" (Pink 2004, 7) should be empowering for all those participating in an applied project. Furthermore, applied visual anthropology offers a point of departure from which to delve deeper into our understandings of power and knowledge, as Gabriela Torres (2009, 278) effectively summarized in her review of Sarah Pink's (2007) book *Visual Interventions: Applied Visual Anthropology*:

> The application of visual anthropology methods allows social scientists to rethink not only the politics of representation but also the boundaries of language, the processes of social change, the nature of activist engagement, agency in cultural production, and most importantly, the role of our own authority as producers of knowledge.

Crucial to this critical approach to visual methods is that we afford the research process importance as a finding in its own right (Pink 2012). Accordingly, my reflections on collaboration and visual ethics with regard to the making of *Anak-Anak Srikandi*

[11] "Social critique in its broadest sense refers to anthropological work that uses its methods and theories to uncover power relations and the structures of inequality" (Low & Merry 2010, 208).

complement the existing literature and contribute to current debates about the nature and scope of audiovisual anthropology, its methods, and the subsequent creation of media ethnographies.

The second case study, which is placed under the heading "activist space," concerns the aforementioned Q! Film Festival (Q!FF). The festival will be analyzed as a specific form of film activism, one that consolidates the local alternative film scene and the LGBT community. In this sense, the Q!FF also belongs to the alternative space movement, which I will describe in the following chapter on the Indonesian cinemascape. In my approach to film activism, I will also look at the spatial effects of cultural activism by considering the strategic ways in which the festival appropriates heteronormative public spaces (see also Boellstorff 2005, 145; Buser et al. 2013, 608). Furthermore, I seek to contribute to the burgeoning field of film festival studies (de Valck & Loist 2011). In particular, I wish to offer new perspectives to the research on identity-based film festivals, of which queer film festivals are a specialized form.[12] Recent years have witnessed growing academic interest in this specific festival genre, yet only a handful of articles have covered the phenomenon as it occurs in Asian countries. The existing literature focuses solely on East Asia, with Tang (2009), Bao (2010), Cui (2010), Yang Yang (2010), and Rhyne (2011) working on China, Perspex (2006) focusing on Taiwan, and Berry (1999) and Kim (2007) looking at South Korea. Despite this East Asian bias, Indonesia's Q!FF is—in terms of the numbers of films screened and exhibition days—the largest queer film festival in Asia and the only one of its kind in the "Muslim world." A detailed scholarly examination is therefore long overdue.[13]

Even though this study focuses on the film activism undertaken by non-normative gendered and sexualized subjects, it does not primarily aim to contribute to specific discussions within the anthropology of sexuality or in transnational studies of gender and sexuality. This is first and foremost a study in the subfield of audiovisual/media anthropology. I nevertheless situate my work on film activism in Indonesia within (and between) bodies of literature that address Indonesian gay and lesbian subject positions from the perspective of either anthropology (see e.g. Wieringa 1999, 2000, 2005a, 2007; Boellstorff 2005, 2007a; Blackwood 2010; Davies 2010) or cultural/Indonesian studies (see,

[12] I use the term "queer film festival" as an umbrella term that also includes film festivals that designate themselves as LGBT film festivals.
[13] Maimunah (2008a) published a short article on the Q!FF in *Inside Indonesia,* but to my knowledge there has yet to be any in-depth scholarly analysis of the festival.

e.g., Murtagh 2013). My project is interdisciplinary in nature, intersecting social science disciplines, overlapping with cultural and literary studies and cinema and communication studies, and finally drawing broadly from gender studies, queer theory, and postcolonial and performance studies. Thus, one could say that I am deploying what Halberstam (1998, 13) calls a "queer methodology," which,

> in a way, is a scavenger methodology that uses different methods to collect and produce information on subjects who have been deliberately or accidentally excluded from traditional studies of human behavior. The queer methodology attempts to combine methods that are often cast as being at odds with each other, and it refuses the academic compulsion toward disciplinary coherence.

Although this kind of project is likely to have its detractors, as Halberstam (ibid., 10) admits, I nonetheless defy disciplinary boundaries and freely mix conventional methods, since this is the strategy that best suits the critical work I aspire to create. My "disidentification" (Muñoz 1999) with a "fundamental scientific obsession" … [that] … "is present in every attempt to demarcate anthropology's territories" (Minh-ha 1991, 44) is also reflected in the film work associated with this practice-based research.

Anak-Anak Srikandi does not fit neatly into the category of ethnographic film, since it blurs the supposed boundary between documentary and fiction that has long been in contention. As Minh-ha (1992, 145) argues,

> Every representation of truth involves elements of fiction, and the difference between so called documentary and fiction in their depiction of reality is a question of degrees of factiousness. The more one tries to clarify the line dividing the two, the deeper one gets entangled in the artifice of boundaries.

Like Minh-ha's films, *Anak-Anak Srikandi* deconstructs some of the canonical forms of both ethnographic film and conventional documentary and might therefore be best understood as an "experimental ethnography" (Russel 1999). The film anthology is emblematic of a new wave of critical projects in anthropological documentary. In response to the ongoing crisis of representation, I identified collaboration and autoethnography[14] as the most appropriate approaches for a project that focuses on the usage of film as a radical cultural practice, not least because members of the Indonesian LGBT community themselves expressed a desire to learn video production in order to tell their own stories. The film's eight autoethnographic episodes, namely *Hello World!* by Imelda

[14] Although the term "autoethnography" is used to refer to a variety of different practices in various academic disciplines, it can generally be understood as a way to use the self as a method of critical inquiry, connecting personal stories to larger social issues and political contexts (see, e.g., Ellis 2004).

Taurinamandala, *Jlamprong* by Eggie Dian, *Acceptance* by Oji, *Edith's Jilbab* by Yulia Dwi Andriyanti, *A Verse* by Winnie Wibowo, *In Between* by Hera Danish, *Deconstruction* by Stea Lim, and *No Label* by Afank Mariani, range from observational documentary through conceptual art to essay film. What unites these formally diverse episodes, however, is their commitment to the personal and the way the directors play with dominant modes of storytelling.

In addition to the methods of collaboration and autoethnography that were used for the production of *Anak-Anak Srikandi*, the written part of my project draws in qualitative research approaches. I conducted in-depth and informal interviews with a variety of cultural producers and LGBT rights activists, visited many different educational and cultural events in Jakarta, hung out at the houses and apartments of the film's directors and other people concerned, and frequented bars and nightclubs. With regard to the Q!FF, I participated in meetings and informal gatherings and took part in activities during the 2008 and 2009 editions. In addition to conducting interviews and participant observation, I collected written and visual material on the Q!FF (e.g. booklets, newspaper articles, trailers). My reflexive accounts of the film workshop and the discussion of ethics in collaborative filmmaking are informed by focus groups, ethnographic notes relating to the filmmaking training, the filmmaking and editing process, and written materials and emails regarding the film. I have also carried out extensive filmic research, watching many films produced by post-New Order professional and amateur filmmakers.

While *Anak-Anak Srikandi* was shot in three cities, the bulk of my research was conducted in Jakarta, the archipelago's capital, headquarters to many LGBT and human rights organizations, and the center of the Indonesian film industry. Unlike most conventional ethnographies conducted in Indonesia, I do not see one specific "ethnolocality" (Boellstorff 2002), such as Java, Sulawesi, or Sumatra, as central to my research. Instead, I explore film activism as a cultural phenomenon shaped by the interplay of global, local, and national cultural, political, and religious discourses. In fact, the cultural activists at the center of my research are connected in national and global networks of both the "queerscape" (Ingram 1997) and what I call the "cinemascape." This dissertation thus provides a "corrective to the focus on locality which remains a stubbornly persistent methodological, theoretical, and political presupposition for anthropological inquiry" (Boellstorff 2007b, 22).

Research Questions and Aims

In this dissertation, I argue that the cultural practices exemplified by *Anak-Anak Srikandi* and the Q! Film Festival (Q!FF) reveal acts of resistance to regimes of dominance, although they may not appear political at first glance (see also Boellstorff 2005, 226-228). By emphasizing "the importance of cultural workers to ground-level politics of the self" (Muñoz 1999, 110), I follow through on the suggestion made by Judith Butler ([1990]1999, 188) to "extend the very notion of the political." This work challenges simplistic understandings of resistance by demonstrating the extent to which film activism is transformative and subversive in the Indonesian context. How do members of the aesthetic movement subvert and rework normative discourses on gender and sexuality through their engaged alternative cultural practices? How do they cope with their exclusion from mainstream society?

Central to these questions is an understanding of the workings and effects of heteronormativity.[15] In the course of this dissertation I will thus untangle the different oppressive discourses that uphold the heteronormative system in Indonesia, especially in regard to the sexual politics of the Indonesian state and the religion-inspired moral debates in the public sphere that foster the idea of sexual and gender minorities as "abjected Others."[16] Furthermore, I am interested in how film activism by non-normative sexual and gendered subjects works within a context of fierce national and religious moral debates on sexuality and the growing conservatism in Indonesian society as a whole.

My fist case study, *Anak-Anak Srikandi*, reveals the workings of heteronormativity and at the same time shows how resistance to its effects is possible. In my analysis, I expand on the recent work of anthropologist Saskia Wieringa (2012), who in her article *Passionate Aesthetics and Symbolic Subversion: Heteronormativity in India and Indonesia* discusses different forms of resistance to the effects of heteronormativity by "abjected women" like widows, sex workers, and women in same-sex relations, ranging from outright and material forms of subversion to more subtle and symbolic subversive acts. In Wieringa's (2012, 522) view, "subversion … should be seen as a continuum of practices and motivations—from

[15] I use the term "heteronormativity" in the same way as Saskia Wieringa (2012, 516), who explains that "Heteronormativity … refers to erotic, sexual and affective practices, the norms governing those practices, the institutions that uphold them, and the effects produced by those norms within individuals." Heteronormativity is a powerful apparatus that prescribes heterosexuality as "natural" and the solely acceptable form of sexual relations. Those who comply with this norm are considered "normal," whereas people who transgress heterosexuality are constructed as "abnormal" or "deviant."

[16] See Kristeva (1982) for a comprehensive discussion of "abjection."

visible, physical forms of resistance, to more invisible, symbolic forms." At the more visual end of this spectrum she places manifest modes of resistance, like the open rejection of heteronormativity by women and LGBT activist groups, who struggle for their rights in the public sphere. At the other end of the continuum, Wieringa situates symbolic and hidden forms of subversion that are "rooted in daily practices and more or less subconscious strategies for [economic, social, emotional, and sometimes even physical] survival" (ibid.).

Several of the autoethnographies that comprise *Anak-Anak Srikandi* employ similar subversive strategies, such as overcoming homelessness and getting an education in Eggie Dian's episode, *Jlamprong*; seeking work to achieve financial independence in Oji's short, *Acceptance*; living a happy life with a same-sex partner in Winnie Wibowo's film, *A Verse;* and claiming one's own religious interpretations in Yulia Dwi Andriyanti's episode, *Edith's Jilbab.* All these daily practices are understood as acts of symbolic subversion that more or less defy heteronormativity. My main aim here is not to analyze symbolic modes of subversion but rather to explore the strategic self-conscious subversion of heteronormativity through disidentification. Building on the work of French philosopher Michel Pêcheux (1982), performance scholar José Esteban Muñoz (1999, 11f) borrows the term "disidentification"—the third mode of dealing with dominant ideology in Pêcheux's theory of disidentification—to describe a practice that "works on and against" dominant ideology:

> Instead of buckling under the pressures of dominant ideology (identification, assimilation) or attempting to break free of its inescapable sphere (counteridentification, utopianism), this "working on and against" is a strategy that tries to transform a cultural logic from within, always laboring to enact permanent structural change while at the same time valuing the importance of local or everyday struggles of resistance.

In *Anak-Anak Srikandi* there are two particular episodes, *Hello World!* by Imelda Taurinamandala and *Deconstruction* by Stea Lim, that make use of a disidentificatory practice, namely the theatrical act of drag. I have chosen to look at these two autoethnographies in detail (Chapter 4), because the directors' artistic choices provide powerful examples of how Indonesian film activists are self-consciously subverting or *queering*[17] heteronormativity.

Irrespective of the directors' self-conscious or subconscious subversion, one aim of this PhD project, its methods, and its underlying conceptual framework is to reposition the women and the Q!FF organizers I worked with as co-producers of knowledge. Disrupting

[17] Sullivan (2003, vi) defines "queering," or "to queer," as "to make strange, to frustrate, to counteract, to delegitimise, to camp up – heteronormative knowledges and institutions and the subjectivities and socialities that are (in)formed by them and that (in)form them."

hegemonic hierarchies by including excluded voices is especially important in this regard, because, as Wieringa and Sívori (2013, 5f) argue,

> In the Northern literature that has set trends in the social sciences and the humanities, the meaning and value of contributions by scholars and activists in the global South are often recognized merely as "cases" or "native knowledge," rather than theoretical and political perspectives worth engaging in as part on an intellectual debate. Thus, in a global division of knowledge, countries in the South are considered the realm of "culture," whereas analysis, interpretation, and debate take place in a separate public sphere, to which Southern intellectuals can claim access only by means of a Northern education, and where they will remain marked as representatives of that foreign culture.

In this dissertation, then, I suggest that autoethnography, in the way it is used in *Anak-Anak Srikandi,* opens a creative space for transformation and intervention. I argue that, like the method of collaborative filmmaking, autoethnography has the ability to challenge the workings of power in ethnographic film by inserting "a subjective, performative, often combative, 'native I' into ethnographic film's detached discourse" (Muñoz 1999, 81). Along similar lines, both Ruth Behar (1993) and Catherine Russel (1999) stress the importance of minoritarian first-person storytelling for rethinking ethnographic knowledge production. "Deconstructing the homogenization of the other" (Russel 1999, 295) through narratives of personal experience serves as a strong critique of dominant cultural representations by Western[18] researchers. For marginalized subjects, autoethnography can therefore be an effective means to engage with hegemonic scholarly and media discourses.

I see *Anak-Anak Srikandi* as a project that powerfully challenges anthropological othering discourses. The collaborative film may thus be understood as having a similar impact on audiovisual anthropology as indigenous media, which, as Faye Ginsburg (1995b, 74) argues, "resituates ethnographic film as a cinematic mediation of culture by calling attention to the presence of other perspectives as well." Ginsburg describes this juxtaposing of different points of view as a "parallax effect." By taking control of their representations, the women add their personal perspectives to the pre-existing representations of Indonesian women-who-love-women in anthropology, Indonesian cinema, and the global circuit of LGBT/queer rights discourses. These alternative representations not only create "productive challenges" to the dominant arenas of identity and visual representations, but "can [also] offer a fuller comprehension of the complexity of the social phenomenon we call culture" (ibid., 65).

[18] Following Davies (2010, 13), I use the terms "Western" and "the West" to denote "not as a geographical territory or natural entity, but rather [as] a historically produced category (Hall 1992) that encompasses particular sets of ideas."

Like Ginsburg, Tom Boellstorff (2010, 220) challenges Western dominant discourses by using "emic theory," an approach he explains as "treat[ing] data … from [his] Indonesian interlocutors as theorizations of social worlds, not just as documentation of those social worlds." Following Boellstorff, I treat the knowledge and data I gained in Indonesia as always already interpreted and theorized, or else take them as sources for further theoretical insights. For instance, my analysis of the Q!FF's film activism is largely based on emic theory. In chapter six, I will discuss and incorporate emic descriptive terms such as "happy activism" and "queer" as used by the Q!FF organizers to explain some important features of the festival.

By the end of this practice-based work, I hope to have contributed not only to the decolonization of anthropological knowledge production but also to the project of bringing into focus audiovisual productions that have so far been largely ignored in Western media and film studies.

A Note on Terminology and the Usage of Sexual Identity Categories

In this section I clarify the terminology I use in the dissertation and explain the reasons for the choices I have made. A number of scholars have problematized the usage of ethnocentric and universalizing categories in transnational studies of sexuality and gender on account of these categories' cultural specificity and their potential to reduce complexities (see, e.g., Mohanty 1991; Elliston 1995; Blackwood & Wieringa 1999; Wieringa & Blackwood 2007; Blackwood 2010). Taking these critiques into account, I have chosen terms and graphic devices that reflect my critical engagement with the politics of language and representation.

One of the main problems mentioned in discussions of the cross-cultural application of foreign identity terms like "gay" or "lesbian" is the Western understanding of sexual identity as fixed and coherent. Therefore, I follow other sexuality scholars focusing on Indonesia in using the terms "subjectivity" and "subject position" rather than "identity" in order to acknowledge the cultural constructedness of social categories and the dynamic and fragmented nature of selfhood (see e.g. Boellstorff 2005; Blackwood 2010). Subject position can be thought of as a "socially recognized category of selfhood; one with a particular history and typically inhabitable in multiple ways," whereas subjectivity refers to the multiple "senses of selfhood persons have as they inhabit a subject position" (Boellstorff 2007a, 36).

The risk of essentializing and homogenizing runs not only in scholarly discourses but also within the realm of the LGBT community. As one of my interlocutors stated,

> I want the LGBT community in Indonesia to be more open-minded about the differences within the LGBT community, because they're in danger of being just as bigoted as the mainstream heterosexists who marginalize LGBT people in the first place. To me, it's like being marginalized within a marginalized group. Sexuality is fluid; just because someone isn't 100 per cent lesbian doesn't mean you have the right to marginalize them among lesbians.

This comment points to the limitations of gay and lesbian identity politics and to the dangers of "homonormativity" (Duggan 2002; Puar 2007), which has the potential to further marginalize individuals who do not fit neatly into fixed identity categories.

The Indonesian directors who took part in the *Anak-Anak Srikandi* project used many different terms to define themselves, ranging from "andro butch" through "girl, boy, whatever" to "pansexual." Given this diversity of identity labels, we have to question how far it is possible to apply the catchall term "lesbian" to this very heterogeneous group, especially since it includes individuals who do not clearly define as women, or who sexually desire both women and men?

Scholars of Indonesia have used a variety of terms to describe Indonesian women in same-sex relationships. Both Tom Boellstorff (2005; 2007a) and gay rights activist Dédé Oetomo primarily use the Indonesian umbrella term *lesbi*.[19] In a similar way, Evelyn Blackwood (2010) uses *lesbi* as an overarching category that includes feminine and masculine women, namely "femme" or "girlfriend" (for the feminine partner) and *tomboi* (for the masculine partner). *Tombois* and girlfriends are also known by the more colloquial equivalents *cowok* (Indonesian for male) and *cewek* (Indonesian for female). Although Blackwood notes that *tombois* primarily identify as men, or sometimes as women with men's souls, and thus cannot be considered as normative women, she still includes them under the umbrella term *lesbi*. Saskia Wieringa (1999; 2005a; 2007) prefers to use the gender-marked terms "butch" and "femme" in her accounts of older working-class lesbians in Jakarta. Anthropologist Sharyn Graham Davies (2010), whose research focuses on South Sulawesi, has chosen to use the culturally specific Bugis (South Sulawesi) terms *calalai* (literally meaning "false man") and *lines* (for their femme partners).

[19] See also Idrus (2006) and Webster (2008) for their usage of the term *lesbi*.

Although the terms *lesbi* and *tomboi* derive from the English language, Boellstorff (2005, 2007) and other scholars of gender and sexuality in Indonesia have emphasized that their meanings and usages are significantly different in the archipelago. These signifiers should thus be understood as uniquely Indonesian, having been embedded in the country's own linguistic and sociological history (see Boellstorff 2005, 8; Blackwood 2010, 26). Evelyn Blackwood has objected to using the English word "lesbian," arguing that it "calls up Eurocentric notions of sexual orientation directed toward other women and an identity that is a core aspect of one's self" (2010, 25). Therefore, she consciously chooses *lesbi* over lesbian in order to remind the reader of the differences between Indonesian and Euro-American women-who-love-women.

Unlike Blackwood, I refrain from using *lesbi* as a catchall word, since during my fieldwork I found that the term "lesbian" was used more commonly. In fact, my interlocutors openly rejected my use of the term *lesbi,* deeming it outdated and pejorative. Such rejection of the term *lesbi* may be limited to the urban middle-class and activist milieu, where I spent most of my time, and may not extend to other social classes or regions of the archipelago, such as Sumatra, where Blackwood conducted her research. However, this case again makes apparent how identity terms are contested and negotiable.

The word "lesbian" has been known in Indonesia since the early 1980s (Boellstorff 2005, 9; Blackwood 2010, 2). In the intervening years it has fallen in and out of linguistic fashion, always depending on the use of the term in heteronormative mainstream society. When "lesbian" became widely used as a derogative term in the 1990s, the LGBT community started using *lesbi*, but was switching back to "lesbian" once the same negative meaning was attached to *lesbi* in the 2000s. Taking this into consideration, I decided to use the term "lesbian" during my fieldwork, as this label held the most currency among the women I socialized with in the urban centers. Despite the changes to their meaning over time, both "lesbian" and *lesbi* remain hegemonic categories of representation that have exclusionary potential. Aware of these shortcomings, in this work I use "lesbian" only as a provisional and heuristic term to indicate subjects who engage in female same-sex relations. Furthermore, I follow Gayatri Gopinath's (1998, 119) advice to use descriptions that "exceed fixed framings of sexuality." Throughout this dissertation I thus also employ the

descriptive term "women-who-love-women."[20]

The deconstruction of normative and fixed gay and lesbian identity categories and the debunking of heteronormativity has also been one of the key concerns of queer studies. With the reclaiming of the derogatory term "queer" as a marker of proud self-identification, queer activists developed an alternative to the essentialist gay and lesbian identity politics of the 1980s (Butler 1993; Jagose 1996), committing to a more inclusive and pluralistic queer politics. In the academic domain, Teresa de Lauretis was the first scholar to theorize the term "queer," noting that "Queer theory conveys a double emphasis—on the conceptual and speculative work involved in discourse production, and on the necessary critical work of deconstructing our own discourses and their constructed silences" (1991, iv). However, scholars working with "queer of color critique" soon pointed out that the initial critical promises of queer theory could not be delivered, because mainstream theorists relied solely on canonical texts, privileging the works of white, middle-class, and mainly male scholars (see, e.g., Muñoz 1999; Ferguson 2004; Puar 2007).

In like manner, anthropologists of sexuality and gender have suggested that the term "queer" is exclusive of alternative genders and sexualities outside the West. Furthermore, its application in non-Western contexts, both as a unifying category of analysis and as an experiential identity term, is problematic due to its highly charged political connotations and cultural specificity. Blackwood and Wieringa (1999, 21) have refused to use the gender-neutral term "queer" because it ignores the specificities of women's experiences in the light of gender hierarchies. In Indonesia, the word "queer" is not yet widely known. Only people engaged with the country's LGBT rights movement are likely to know what queer refers to and what the history of the term is. Most Indonesian activists prefer to utilize the identity terms "lesbian," "gay," "bisexual," and "transgender."

Despite the fact that queer is virtually unknown in Indonesia, I find it useful to apply a queer framework to my dissertation. Thus, I draw on Judith Butler (1993, 228), who has conceptualized queer as "a point of departure for a site of historical reflections and futural imaginings." I concur with Boellstorff's (2007, 3) belief that "anthropology can certainly benefit from a closer exchange with queer studies." However, I also find it problematic to use queer as an umbrella term for LGBT people and generally refrain from using the word as another identity category for specific subjectivities in Indonesia.

[20] I am of course aware of the fact that, just as scholars of sexuality and gender have problematized the universality of the category "lesbian," participants in intersectionality debates within feminist studies have criticized the category "woman" for its exclusionary potential (see, e.g., Brah & Phoenix 2004).

In chapter four, I will demonstrate that queer is a useful analytical etic device, one that works "as an engaged mode of critical inquiry" (Eng et al. 2005, 1) for my interpretation of two of the eight autoethnographies comprising the *Anak-Anak Srikandi* anthology. I will show how these queer autoethnographies subvert heteronormativity through the denaturalization of gender. Echoing Boellstorff's (2007a, 20) view that queer can be used both as an etic and emic concept, I show how the Q! Film Festival appropriates and reworks the term. In the same chapter, I also use queer in its etic sense when referring to queer film festivals, which are inflected by and participate in Western global queer discourses.

In discussing the subject positions of my interlocutors, I also make use of the term *waria* (from Indonesian *wanita pria,* woman man), which is widely used in Indonesia for male-bodied individuals who self-identify as women or think of themselves as man with a women's soul. Across Indonesia, one finds a number other local terms that are similar in meaning to *waria*. Among the most common are the slang variants *banci* and *bencong*, as well as *wadam* (from Indonesian *wanita adam*, woman adam, as in Adam and Eve), *walsu* (from Indonesina *wanita palsu*, false woman), and the Bugis term *calabai* (literally meaning "false women") (see Boellstorff 2007a, 192; Davies 2010, 10f).

In Indonesia there also exist indigenous and sacred homosexualities and gender transgressors that Boellstorff (2005, 2007a) has described as "ethnolocalized homosexual and transvestite professionals" (ETPs), who occupy a central role in religious rites and rituals. Well-known examples of ETPs are the *bissu* in South Sulawesi and the *warok* found in the Ponorogo region of eastern Java. Whereas the *bissus* are androgynous shamans, part deity, who symbolically embody male and female elements (Davies 2010, 11-12, 177f), the *warok* are identified with mystical knowledge and magical power. Since these capacities depend on their refraining from sex with women, during their professional occupation as *warok* they take on younger men known as *gemblak* as domestic partners (Wilson 1999; Boellstorff 2005, 40f).[21]

Chapter Outline

In this introductory chapter I have laid out the ethnographic context, theoretical terrain, and conceptual framework of this practice-based research. In the chapters that follow, I

[21] For pre-colonial classifications of gender and sexuality, see Andaya (2006), Blackwood (2005), Peletz (2009), and Wieringa (2010b).

look at the film activism of *Anak-Anak Srikandi* and the Q! Film Festival (Q!FF). My objective is to identify the practices through which cultural producers perform activist citizenship. Throughout this dissertation I situate both case studies within the political and moral debates surrounding sexuality in the Indonesian public sphere.

In chapter two, I introduce the reader to some of the key players in the Indonesian alternative film scene and simultaneously look at the changes in film mediation practices (production, discussion, distribution, consumption) and modes of representation in post-New Order Indonesia. I highlight the different ways in which the new generation of filmmakers imagines post-New Order Indonesia and claims its political right to freedom of expression. The aim of this chapter is to develop the basis for my argument that cinema has become an important site for claiming activist citizenship.

In chapter three, I turn my attention to the process and methods of collaboratively producing *Anak-Anak Srikandi*. I understand the creative practice of audiovisual media production as a field of inquiry in its own right. I first describe the different steps in the filmmaking process, ranging from pre-production to post-production, and then go on to address the dilemmas I encountered in the making of the film, including problems of authorship and payment. My critical reflections in this chapter are rather open-ended, offering points of departure for more engaged and open discussions about visual ethics. Finally, I demonstrate how the very process of collaborative filmmaking creates a space of transformation for the cultural producers involved.

In chapter four, I shift the focus from the making of the collective audiovisual ethnography to the reading of its film text. Looking at two particular episodes from the anthology, I examine how heteronormativity is subverted through the self-conscious use of the disidentificatory practice of drag. I understand the personal short films in *Anak-Anak Srikandi* as enactments of the directors' political subjectivities. By exploring their critical engagement with dominant regimes of gender and sexuality, I demonstrate how queer autoethnography serves as an effective tool for intervention, opening up new spaces in which to imagine novel ways of being-in-the-world.

Chapter five connects film activism by Indonesian LGBT people to wider state discourses on sexual politics and religiously motivated moral discourses in the public sphere. I explore the ongoing process of nation formation in Indonesia as deeply gendered and sexual. After a short historical introduction focusing on New Order gender ideologies and sexual politics, I go on to examine the regulation of sexuality in the era of

democratization and Islamization in contemporary Indonesia. Using the example of the Islamic Defenders Front (*Front Pembela Islam*, FPI), I show how conservative Islamic groups try to garner influence and power through strategic acts of violence framed as a war against "Western decadence." Specifically, I discuss the FPI's moral campaign against the Q!FF, demonstrating how LGBT rights are increasingly under attack for not being in accordance with invented "traditional Islamic values."

In chapter six, I examine how the Q!FF has responded to the FPI attack by shifting the festival's self-understanding toward a more political stance. I take a closer look at the organization of the Q!FF and provide yet another model of activism through film, which, on the one hand, aims to challenge heteronormativity and, on the other hand, promotes affinity-based politics. To outline the festival's different activist practices, I draw from extensive observations and interviews with its organizers and volunteers.

In a short concluding chapter, I offer some thoughts about film activism as a form of resistance to dominant discourses, thereby making a significant contribution to anthropological understandings of new engagements with media in non-Western contexts. I do not consider this current written articulation of the intersection of visual culture and political transformation in post-Suharto Indonesia as a conclusive statement. Instead, I like to think of it as a moment of scholarly expression that I hope will be expanded through new conversations and academic exchange.

CHAPTER 2

THE INDONESIAN CINEMASCAPE: NEW FILM MEDIATION PRACTICES AND REPRESENTATIONS

This chapter looks at the changes in film mediation practices (producing, discussing, distributing, and consuming films) and new cinematic representations after Suharto's downfall in 1998. *Reformasi* not only paved the way for democracy but also marked the rebirth of the Indonesian film industry. In the midst of crumbling state control, *film independen*, or "side stream" film (Prakosa 2005, 3), mushroomed throughout the archipelago, changing the Indonesian cinematic landscape (cinemascape) dramatically.[22] It led to the proliferation of what Hafiz (2011) has called a "new generation of Indonesian cinema" (*generasi baru dunia perfilman Indonesia*). But the revival of Indonesian film was as much a result of far-reaching political, social, and economic transformations as of the democratization processes brought about by new digital media technologies. As Indonesianist and film scholar Katinka van Heeren (2009, 73) argues, "The widespread availability of such new audiovisual technologies as digital video cameras and projectors, liberally dosed with the spirit of reform which permeated into the Indonesian film scene, were the midwives who ushered in the genesis of a new film movement." Just as in neighboring Southeast Asian countries, these new audiovisual technologies quickly became part of the cosmopolitan lifestyle of Indonesian middle-class youth (Baumgärtel 2012a; van Heeren 2012).

Filmmking became one of the youth's favorite media practices for self-expression and cultural production. It has quickly developed into an integral part of the booming Indonesian "do-it-yourself" (DIY) movement, one of the biggest in the world (Luvaas 2012, xvi). In his book *DIY Style: Fashion, Music and Global Digital Culture*, anthropologist Brent Luvaas (2012) investigates the impact of new media technologies on Indonesian youth culture and the subsequent development of a creative industry. Crucial to contemporary alternative cultural productions in Indonesia is what Luvaas (ibid., 6) calls the "DIY ethos." DIY, he explains, is a philosophy and way of life, the key to autonomy and personal development. In this chapter, I will expand on Luvaas's important research

[22] My understanding of cinema is an inclusive one, more akin to film industry, comprising filmmaking practices, different film formats and genres as well as exhibition spaces and sites of consumption.

on the Indonesian indie music[23] and fashion scene by examining the "DIY ethos" of the new generation of independent filmmakers.

The Indonesian cinemascape since 1998 has been characterized not only by experimentation with new audiovisual technologies but also by exploration of novel content. The first few post-Suharto filmmakers clearly distanced themselves from the dominant New Order film conventions and narratives. They now wanted to address different, often formerly taboo, topics and to engage with themes from the margins of society, including alternative genders and sexualities, political issues, the role of Chinese Indonesians, and inter-faith relationships, among others. This new development stemmed from the creation of new citizen subjects who, in the wake of the country's democratic opening, have become more politically aware and have started to express their wishes for a new nation in the public sphere.

Reformasi has significantly transformed the relationship between the state and society. Eager to exercise their newly earned political rights, young cultural producers have become involved in politics and actively engaged in the formation of new discourses on the nation (see Paramadhita 2012). Both secular and religious groups sought to represent their own imaginations of a new nation in the public sphere. Cinema became one of the major outlets in this struggle for representation. On the one hand, Muslim media mushroomed and *film Islami* was established as a new genre (Imanjaya 2009; Sasono 2011; Paramaditha 2011a; Hoesterey & Clark 2012; Imanda 2012; van Heeren 2012). On the other hand, gender and sexuality became favored topics of the mainly secular new generation of filmmakers.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first section will give a brief overview of the birth of the alternative film movement. The second part will examine the development of a domestic film festival circuit and the role of "alternative spaces" (*ruang-ruang alternatif*) for the exhibition and distribution of alternative films. Next, the figure of the new activist citizen subject as embodied in the young cultural producers will be explored. The last section will discuss the portrayal of female same-sex love in post-1998 mainstream fiction films.

[23] Building on the work of anthropologist Wendy Fonarow, Luvaas (2012, 14) defines "indie music" as "a style of production and distribution outside mainstream commercial channels."

"Dead End" as New Beginning: The Birth of the Independent Film Movement

The sweet irony is that kuldesak means dead end.
But for us, Kuldesak was like a new beginning
(Riza, interviewed in Nakashima 2004).

Kuldesak and "I-Sinema"

In 1996, four young filmmakers, namely Mira Lesmana, Riri Riza, Nan T. Achnas, and Rizal Mantovani, embarked on a mission to contest and subvert the establishment of New Order mainstream cinema. The four shared a passion for cinema and all dreamed of becoming successful directors, but they were stuck in the cinematic dead end of Suharto's authoritarian regime. Not only was access to the New Order film regulation system denied to them, but also the formerly prolific Indonesian film industry had recently collapsed. According to Krishna Sen and David Hill (2007, 137), the number of commercial fiction films produced in Indonesia fell from 95 in 1991 to only thirteen in 1994.[24]

Despite the seeming impasse, the fearless four were still set on making movies, albeit very different ones from the veteran New Order filmmakers, such as Teguh Kara, Slamet Rahardjo, and Syumanjaya (Paramaditha 2007). The strict and standardized New Order cinema, with its hegemonic narratives, did not appeal to these young filmmakers. The language of the youth was a different one. The four directors felt misunderstood by the older generation, and the very few stories depicted on the silver screen could not have been further from their own realities. Frustrated, yet equipped with a "nothing to lose" mentality, they decided to make a movie that reflected the spirit of youth, and deals with the questions important to their generation. In other words, they wanted to create their own "imagined world" (Appadurai 1996) and simultaneously revive the dormant film industry.

Inspired by the guerrilla filmmaking of Robert Rodriguez and his book *Rebel Without a Crew* (1995), the group decided to independently produce their debut film, *Kuldesak* (Cul-de-Sac 1998). Shot underground with neither budget nor shooting permit,

[24] The decline of the Indonesian film industry can be attributed to several factors. First, when the Subenta group acquired monopoly rights over the domestic film market, they started to exclusively distribute Hollywood films through their theater chain, Cinema 21. Second, with the rise in the number of private commercial television stations in the early 1990s (Kitley 2000), many filmmakers turned their backs on cinema and moved into the production of serialized television dramas (*sinetron*). Third, the proliferation of VCDs in the late 1990s led to a further drop in the number of moviegoers. Finally, with the Asian financial crisis (*Krismon*) in 1997/98, the domestic film industry came to a virtual standstill (see van Heeren 2012).

Kuldesak defied all of the New Order film production rules.[25] This rebellious movie consists of four short films that are all set in the urban jungle of Jakarta and deal with the issues of middle-class youth: isolation, existential fear, violence, drugs, and homosexuality.[26] *Kuldesak* was a "well-timed wake-up call" for the new generation of cultural producers, as Riri Riza once told me in an interview (Coppens 2009b). It reached movie theaters only months after Suharto's fall in November 1998 and immediately became a box office hit. The Indonesian press gave *Kuldesak* rave reviews and hailed it as the first ever Indonesian independent feature film (van Heeren 2012, 54). The film's cutting-edge MTV style and never-before-seen controversial content were groundbreaking and resonated closely with the experiences and hopes of Indonesia's urban youth.

Without doubt, *Kuldesak*'s great success can be attributed to its celebration of and reference to national and American popular culture. Like most Indonesian middle-class youth, the four directors, who all had a background in TV advertisements and music videos, grew up with MTV and Hollywood. In the film, the directors make explicit reference to Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994), Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976), and grunge music icon Kurt Cobain. The soundtrack consists of hip indie rock tunes from local bands and pop stars like rapper Iwa K., Achmad Dhani, and the famous indie rock band Slank, who are themselves deeply influenced by American pop culture and make guest appearances in the film (see also Paramaditha 2007; Setiyawan 2009, 101f). The conscious mixing of global and local pop culture reflects the adoption of cut-and-paste practices by Indonesian youth, which Luvaas (2012, 41) identifies in the fields of indie music and fashion and which can also be observed in filmmaking practices. The *Kuldesak* directors followed this cut-and-paste trend, appropriating globally circulating ideas, images, and sounds and in the process creating their very own pop cultural product. In retrospect, *Kuldesak* fulfilled its directors' intentions. It defied the New Order film regulation system and ushered in a new age of Indonesian filmmaking. Indeed, the film marked a "turning point in the history of modern Indonesian cinema" (Setiyawan 2009, 99) and the dawn of what has come to be known as the post-New Order independent film movement, or *film independen*.

[25] Struggling with finances, it took the filmmakers two years to make the film. It was finally finished with a post-production grant from the Dutch Hubert Bals Fund.
[26] For a detailed analysis of *Kuldesak*, see Clark (2004) and Setiyawan (2009). The film has also received academic attention from van Heeren (2002, 2012) and Paramaditha (2007, 2011b).

Indonesian *film independen* has to be understood differently from the common Western meaning of independent cinema, which implies an opposition to the mainstream studio system (van Heeren 2012, 53). In fact, the term "independent" or *independen* was somewhat of a misnomer for the nascent Indonesian film movement: in the absence of a functioning film industry, there was no mainstream to which these young filmmakers could be opposed; *every* filmmaker was independent in the early 2000s (see also Lent 2012, 15). It is more fruitful, I suggest, to understand "independence" as tantamount to the famous phrase of one of the main characters in *Kuldesak,* who claims, "*Gue cuma pengen bikin film*" ("I just want to make movies"). For young cultural producers, making films DIY style was pivotal to the very process of coming of age, which also meant becoming a full-fledged and independently thinking citizen subject. Like all burgeoning DIY practices during the political transition, filmmaking was a "middle-class project of identity formation" (Luvaas 2012, 39). By embracing this independent spirit, Indonesian youth started to re-imagine the Indonesian nation.

Van Heeren (2012, 57) identifies two factions within the label of *film independen*: "I-Sinema" and *mafins*. The I-Sinema movement was located on the mainstream side of the indie continuum. Inspired by the Dogma 95 manifesto, which was authored by the Danish avant-garde filmmakers Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg, the four *Kuldesak* directors initiated I-Sinema shortly after the release of their debut film. Together with eleven fellow filmmakers, they signed the I-Sinema manifesto in October 1999. According to Sharpe (2002), the "I" in I-Sinema stands for both "Indonesian" and "Independent," as well as for the English terms "eye" and "I." Two concerns lay behind the development of I-Sinema. The first was the search for new ways of making feature films in order to revive the Indonesian film industry. The second and more important one was to offer audiences new types of Indonesian films, which could give "options, insights, and different experiences" (*memberi pilihan, wawasan, serta pengalaman berbeda*) (Imanjaya 2009, FN 33).

The use of digital video is probably one of the main characteristics of the I-Sinema films. Digital video was not only much cheaper and more flexible than the 35mm film format; it also had a unique aesthetic, which allowed the young filmmakers to set themselves apart from the previous generation of directors in an even more radical manner than had been possible with *Kuldesak* before. In terms of productivity, however, I-Sinema was not hugely successful, giving rise to just four feature films: *Sebuah Pertanyaan untuk Cinta* (A Question of Love, dir. Enison Sinaro, 2000), *Eliana Eliana* (dir. Riri Riza, 2002), *Bendera*

(The Flag, dir. Nan Achnas, 2002), and *Titik Hitam* (Black Dot, dir. Sentot Sahid, 2002). It is not clear why there were not more films produced under the I-Sinema label, but what can be said with more certainty is that apart from the critically acclaimed *Eliana Eliana,* the I-Sinema films failed to live up to the high expectations that were set with the success of *Kuldesak* (see Anwar 2002a, 2002b). In his sharp-tongued review of the last I-Sinema production, *Titik Hitam,* Joko Anwar (2002b) writes the following: "At [a] time when local audiences desperately need another movie to keep their faith in the newly reborn local film industry, *Titik Hitam* is likely to end up on the viewers' disappointment list." In particular, Anwar, who had yet to become an acclaimed screenwriter-director himself, was critical of the lack of scriptwriting skills and the resultant bad storytelling in most of the post-New Order movies.[27] Whether successful or not as a film movement, I-Sinema deserves credit for pioneering the use of digital video technology in Indonesia (see Sharpe 2009).

Independent Film Communities

The I-Sinema movement was integral in the creation of the other faction under the *film independen* label: the community of "independent film creatures" (*mahluk film independen,* or *mafins* for short) (van Heeren 2012, 53). Gripped by the spirit of "making-your-own-film," young Indonesians started to take advantage of the new freedom of expression and the widespread availability of new audiovisual technologies. Much more underground, or side-stream, than the technically trained and film-educated I-Sinema filmmakers, the *mafins* had no background in filmmaking whatsoever. They were mostly students, unskilled amateurs, who obtained a digital camera and set out to tell their own stories in their own ways and, most importantly, in their own mother tongue, a move intended to strengthen their local identities and to disassociate themselves from the Jakarta-based film elite (van Heeren 2012, 56).

The Community of Independent Film (Konfiden, Komunitas Film Independen) inspired the founding of independent film communities (*komunitas film*), alternative cultural spaces, and film festivals across the archipelago, especially in Java's urban centers of Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, and Malang (but later also in Bali, Sulawesi, and Sumatra) (Jayasrana 2007; Ratna 2010; van Heeren 2012, 53). Konfiden was among the first film communities that held film discussion forums and screenings of local indie films in cine clubs, galleries, foreign cultural centers, and universities. Later, Konfiden started

[27] Joko Anwar made his directorial debut in 2005 with *Janji Joni* (Joni's Promise).

organizing the Indonesian Independent Film and Video Festival (FFVII, Festival Film dan Video Independen Indonesia), which took place for the first time in October 1999 (van Heeren 2012, 54).[28] Like the I-Sinema movement, Konfiden was determined to revive the Indonesian film industry. Their approach was very different, however. Whereas the I-Sinema filmmakers focused on the artistic production and commercial viability of films, Konfiden emphasized education through the publication of a monthly bulletin and the organization of screening events with film discussions and film workshops. Konfiden sought to create new discourses on cinema, addressing the lack of film education among the young generation. One of their main methods was organizing traveling film screenings (*film keliling*), at which they introduced the ideas of alternative film mediation practices and the concept of *film independen* to a wider public (van Heeren 2012, 54.).

The Internet was another important factor behind the mushrooming of alternative filmmaking. Filmmaker and curator Dimas Jayasrana (2007) recalls how the access to free information on the Internet helped him to learn the basics of film theory and practice. The Internet also became the primary communication medium among the various *komunitas film* that were scattered throughout the country (Ratna 2010). Although the golden years of *film independen* were over by the early 2000s, the mission of the individual filmmakers to produce more local films for local audiences remains strong to this day.

In the next section, I will examine the development and importance of film festivals and "alternative spaces" (*ruang-ruang alternatif*) as new exhibition and consumption sites.

Film Festivals and Alternative Spaces

The Indonesian Film Festival Circuit

Shortly after the first Konfiden independent film festival (FFVII) took place, Jakarta saw the birth of the Jakarta International Film Festival (Jiffest), the first film event of international scale to be held in the country.[29] Jiffest was founded by Stanford-educated documentary filmmaker and Indonesian film producer Shanty Harmayn and Franco-American film producer Natacha Devillers. In the foreword of the very first Jiffest catalogue, they wrote the following: "Dear audience, you are the future of Jakarta

[28] FFVII lasted for four years (1999-2002). In 2006, Konfiden reinvented its festival, re-launching it under the new name Konfiden Short Film Festival (Festival Film Pendek Konfiden) (Jayasrana 2007; Ratna 2010).
[29] Jiffest was held every December for eleven years until it was forced to discontinue in 2012 due to lack of funding. Shortly after I started writing this chapter, I learned the news that Jiffest has been re-launched.

International Film Festival and the key to the resurrection of the national film industry, because good filmmakers can only come from a good audience." Indeed, the first Jiffest was a real success. An estimated audience of 18,000 attended the event during the eight days of the festival, which took place from 20 to 28 November 1999.

In fact, the launch of FFVII and Jiffest helped to create a large community of festivalgoers, who learned to appreciate both alternative international productions, unavailable in commercial movie theaters, and Indonesian films. Notably, FFVII and Jiffest inspired the foundation of a wide range of film festivals in the following years. Most of these emerged in Jakarta, the center of the Indonesian film industry. As I will discuss in chapter six, the Q!FF was one of the first festivals to cater to a specific community. Another example of an identity-based film festival is the women-centered V Film Festival ("V" stands for "vision"), which took place for the first time in 2009.[30] In regards to specialized film festivals focusing on specific types of films, such as animation or documentary, the Ok.Video Festival, a bi-annual festival for experimental films and video art initiated by ruangrupa in 2004, is a good example. The same year, Hello Motion Academy, a private school for animation and cinema, initiated Hellofest Jakarta, which focuses on animation and short films. An example of a genre-based film festival is the Indonesian International Fantasy Film Festival (ScreamfestIndo).

Alongside the capital, the Javanese cultural and artistic center of Yogyakarta has developed into a major film festival city, hosting Indonesia's biggest showcase for national and international documentary films, the Festival Film Dokumenter (FFD, Documentary Film Festival). Organized by the very active local Komunitas Dokumenter Yogyakarta (Yogyakarta Documentary Community), FFD has been held every December since its foundation in 2002. Since 2006, Yogyakarta has also hosted the Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival (JAFF), one of the biggest regional festivals for Asian cinema. JAFF is part of the Network for the Promotion of Asian Cinema (NETPAC), a pan-Asian film and cultural organization with thirty member countries, which over the twenty-three years of its existence has established itself as the "leading platform for the discovery and promotion of

[30] The V Film Festival was co-organized by Komunitas Salihara, the Kartini Asia Network, the Kalyana Shira Foundation, and Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan. The festival aims at empowering women. In order for films to be eligible for screening at the festival they must have a female director and primarily female cast. In 2009, a minor dispute occurred between the festival organizers and feminist writer Julia Suryakusuma, who was upset that the V Film Festival claimed in its brochure to be the first international women's film festival in Indonesia, thereby ignoring the fact that thirteen years earlier she had organized the Jakarta International Women's Film Week to commemorate International's Women's Day (see Suryakusuma 2009).

Asian cinema" (see http://www.netpacasia.org/). JAFF is also remarkable for the fact that it counts some of the most successful and prestigious Indonesian film directors among its key staff. The festival president is no less a figure than international festival darling Garin Nugroho, the managing director is Ifa Isfansyah, and up-and-coming director Yosep Anggi Noen serves as program director.

Whereas most of these specialized film festivals screen both national and international films, local-scale festivals like the Purbalingga Film Festival (Festival Film Purbalingga) primarily cater to local filmmakers and audiences. Held in central Java, the Purbalingga festival was first organized in 2007 by the Community of Cinema Lovers. Over time, the festival has managed to establish a network of filmmakers within the Banyumas Besar Area; it also holds a short-film competition for students and organizes open-air screenings in villages throughout the region (Ratna 2010; Jayasrana 2013). In her description of the positive stimulus this kind of film festival creates within local communities, film festival organizer and director of the Jakarta-based short-film distribution platform Bomeboe, Lulu Ratna (2010), stresses the following points:

> Local film festivals provide a space for local filmmakers to express themselves in their own language and perspective, adding to the richness of forms, styles, and language of Indonesian films. … [T]hey [local film festivals] have the ability to create public appreciation on the local level, which is the baby step toward creating a prospective Indonesian film market. … So, local film festivals have a very important role to play in introducing and connecting filmmakers to the grassroots audience. Local film festivals are the places where the general audience can see alternative cinema, which is different from the kind of audiovisual reference they have from television.

In addition to the widespread proliferation of Indonesian local, national, and international film festivals, foreign cultural centers have also started to hold film screenings and to organize film festivals to promote their national cinema to Indonesian audiences. As early as 1999, the main European cultural centers (e.g. Erasmus Huis, Goethe Institute, Institut Français, Instituto Italiano di Cultura) organized the traveling European Film Festival (since 2007 named Europe on Screen).

Alternative Spaces

"Alternative spaces" (*ruang-ruang alternatif*) proliferated around the same time as the film festival boom (Juliastuti 2009; Hafiz 2010; Ratna 2010). These are not a new phenomenon, however. As Juliastuti (2009, 2012) explains, alternative art and art spaces had emerged during the New Order in opposition to Suharto's cultural hegemonism in the late 1980s. The formal and government-controlled artistic spaces like the Museum Nasional, national

cultural centers (Taman Budaya), and commercial galleries did not offer scope for experimentation or critical discourses. As a response to the absence of outlets for contemporary art, alternative exhibition spaces developed to exhibit works that countered the establishment (Ingham 2009, 14f). At that time, alternative art was understood as both a political opposition to the oppressive regime as well as an aesthetic opposition to the mainstream and government understanding of art as a decorative imitation of the archipelago's rich ethnic arts-and-crafts tradition (ibid., 16). One of the key alternative art exhibition spaces was the Cemeti Art House (now Visual Art Archive, IVAA), which was founded in Yogyakarta in 1988. Cemeti provided an alternative infrastructure to the mainstream and commercial art world and was the very first gallery to exhibit contemporary Indonesian alternative art.

With the beginning of *Reformasi* the notion of "alternativeness" was appropriated by the young generation of cultural producers, albeit without its political radicalness. The new alternative spaces served as meeting places (*tempat pertemuan*), sites of DIY cultural productions (see Luvaas 2012, 64), places for alternative exhibition and distribution, and educational centers. Established in 2000, the arts collective ruangrupa (founded by Ronny Agustinus, Oky Arfie, Ade Darmawan, Hafiz, Lilia Nursita, Rithmi Widanarko, and Ade Tanesia) is one of the longest-running and most notorious alternative spaces in the country, where visual artists, filmmakers, performance artists, writers, photographers, graphic designers, researchers, architects, and musicians gather. Ruangrupa emphasizes the importance of alternative spaces as meeting places where art can develop and where people of all different backgrounds can come together and hang out (*nongkrong*), exchange ideas, explore, experiment, and create. Luvaas (2012, 64) argues that "just hanging out" (*nongkrong aja*) is one of the most important creative activities within alternative spaces, as it "mediates all other forms of production and consumption for participants. Hanging out is where ideas are generated, group sensibilities are forged, and collective interpretations developed."

During hangout sessions knowledge is exchanged and produced extensively. In this sense, alternative spaces also function as educational centers (see Jayasrana 2007; Juliastuti 2009). Ruangrupa co-founder Ade Darmawan (interviewed in Juliastuti 2012) describes the collaborative production of knowledge as follows:

> Ruru is like a beehive or an ant colony, where each person piles up his or her knowledge, and lets the other take from it. Informal discussions take place spontaneously and new

> ideas emerge from exchange practices. Rather than a knowledge-transfer process, what we see is a knowledge transaction. Ruru works like a football team. Each person works and plays hard by his and her own strength on a horizontal field. … We believe that our idea supply is abundant, and therefore consider ownership issues to be minor. Ideas will be shared and combined with other's ideas. It has to do with our commitment to collaborative practices as an important working method.

As part of its learning process, ruangrupa also emphasizes research, analysis, and engagement in cultural discourses. In another interview (Wiyanto 2005), Darmawan further explains:

> We thought there needed to be a "space" that conveyed the ideas of visual art, which are very important to analyze, mediate, and furnish, like public art, performance art, and video art. These are results of today's cultural development and visual strategies that are employed in the debate about and the investigation of social, cultural, and political phenomena.

Given Indonesia's lack of a functioning infrastructure for the arts and of formal education in art theory and history, curatorial practices, and cinema studies, alternative spaces have become the primary sites for critical visual education. Ruangrupa, for example, performs and promotes the study of visual culture through different collaborative initiatives, including exhibitions (e.g. Jakarta 32°C), film festivals (e.g. Ok.Video), visual culture writing and curatorial workshops, visual archiving, publications (e.g. Karbon Jurnal), and discussion and experimentation forums (e.g. Art Lab). In addition, ruangrupa has opened the RURU Gallery to support the development of contemporary art and provide an exhibition space for young artists. Other creative communities deploy similar measures to compensate for the lack of a formal arts infrastructure. The more film-oriented groups have also opened up spaces for new discourses on film and video and encouraged their members to approach the audiovisual medium in different, formerly unknown ways (Juliastuti 2009).

Initially, alternative spaces started as true "home affairs," where filmmakers screened their "bedroom produced" (Baumgärtel 2012b, 26) short films in their houses and backyards or in those of fellow community members. The proliferation of these "microcinemas" (ibid., 21) soon stretched beyond the filmmakers' private homes. In many cases, individuals donated money to their communities so that the latter could rent a space for their cultural activities. Different cities have witnessed variously successful experiments with what Juliastuti (2009) describes as "restaurant-galleries," "café-libraries," "distro-galleries" (distro: independent distribution outlet), and "cine club-cafés." The combination of art and leisure, which is clearly inspired by the popular Indonesian café culture, reflects a

modern cosmopolitan urban lifestyle. This coffeeshopification of alternative cultural spaces helps to attract more people, which in turn generates income to cover some of the operational costs.

Yogyakarta's Kinoki is the prototype of a multifunctional alternative screening space. It is based on a holistic concept that successfully integrates knowledge production, artistic creation, and commercial enterprise. In its function as an alternative space for the local film community, Kinoki regularly holds filmmaking and film criticism workshops, organizes reading and discussion forums to enhance the discourse on film and video, and publishes a periodical newsletter on film called *Ikonik*. Additionally, Kinoki owns a small distro-like shop, distributing VCDs and DVDs of alternative films by young, local filmmakers, T-shirts by local designers, self-published magazines, and music by local bands. As a form of grassroots "DIY capitalism" (Luvaas 2012, 61), distros are pivotal for the permanent distribution of alternative cultural products like films. Other examples of successful multifunctional alternative screening spaces include the library/bookshop-café Kineruku in Bandung and Reading Room in South Jakarta.

Talking about *film independen*, *komunitas film,* and *ruang-ruang alternatif* prompts questions regarding their political potential and relevance in contemporary Indonesia. To what extent can the aesthetic practices of Indonesian middle-class youth be understood as activism or resistance? How do post-New Order filmmakers enact a political subjectivity? In order to answer these questions, in the next section I will examine the political engagement of filmmakers from both the new mainstream (the former Alternative) and the side-stream (the alternative to the Alternative).

Cultural Producers as Activist Citizens

A number of scholars and film critics have stated that the new generation of cultural producers is rather apolitical in comparison to those older artists and filmmakers who created explicitly political work in opposition to the repressive regime of the New Order. Ingham (2009, 162), who studied the Indonesian alternative visual arts scene in the 1990s, declares, "By 2000 young visual artists rejected 'serious message art,' challenging what was now seen as a new establishment, and developed their own alternative artistic initiatives, declaring they just wanted to have fun." In a similar vein, Luvaas (2012, 50, 127) discusses the "just having fun" and "doing what you like" (*yang senang aja*) ethos in regard to underground music, asserting that with the fall of Suharto socio-political themes in songs

likewise disappeared. In the field of cinema, film studies scholar Ekky Imanjaya (2009) criticizes the commercialism and lack of socio-political issues in contemporary Indonesian films:

> Although the Reform has opened many opportunities to make films in accordance with their [the young generation of filmmakers'] idealism, only few political films were produced. While Garin Nugroho often makes clear political and cultural statements in his films, this younger generation mostly shows the opposite indication. There are no films made by this generation with political or critical thought against government's policy or as statements concerning important events or notorious phenomena such as corruption, traffic jams, rising fuel prices, or natural disasters, to name a few.

In this statement, Imanjaya (2009) mainly refers to a group of filmmakers who concentrate their efforts on profitable genres (e.g. horror[31], teenage romance flicks, and comedies) for commercial gain, catering chiefly to audiences between fifteen and twenty-five years of age (Imanjaya 2009). This strategy led to a significant rise in production of commercial domestic films.[32] Filmmaker and video activist Dimas Jayasrana (2013) has a slightly different view from Imanjaya. Jayasrana admits that there are far fewer commercial films than side-stream films dealing with socio-political issues, but for him the lack of idealism is not the main problem. Instead, Jayasrana shares the previously mentioned opinion of Joko Anwar that most Indonesian films are of rather poor quality, especially in terms of scriptwriting and storytelling. Furthermore, he is highly critical of the majority of commercial filmmakers for their one-sided perspective when dealing with Indonesian society in their films, stating that

> most of the films are coming from a middle-class stereotypical point of view; it's empty; it's exotic, and it's full of moralistic messages that in the end provide nothing but social masturbation critique. It provides the audience with no imagination. It provides no space for intellectuality. It's not humble. It's a total mediocrity.

This is not to say, however, that Imanjaya (2009), Jayasrana (2013), and fellow-critic Yuliawan (2012) do not recognize the critical work produced by a small fraction of the young generation. Among the "idealistic filmmakers" who successfully combine commerce and socio-political commitment, they mention Riri Riza, Mira Lesmana, and Nia Dinata, while on the more alternative, art-house side they refer to new talents like Edwin and

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31 The horror genre received a boost of interest following the unexpected box office success of the independently produced film *Jelangkung* (2001) by *Kuldesak* director Rizal Mantovani (see also van Heeren 2012; Yuliawan 2012).

32 The production of commercial feature films increased from four films in 1999 to fifteen in 2003. By 2007 production had risen to seventy-eight films per year (Kristanto 2007).

Yosep Anggie Noen.[33] However, comments like those above indicate that the crisis of the Indonesian film industry is far from over, and some more radical voices like Dimas Jayasrana have gone so far as to argue that Indonesia has yet to develop a film industry proper.

In this section I want to draw attention to the notion of the political in contemporary film mediation practices. One question that needs to be considered is whether activism and politics are actually absent from the films of the new generation or simply constituted in different ways. Luvaas (2012, 127) suggests that just because indie musicians stopped singing about regime change does not automatically mean that they stopped being political altogether, and I would argue the same for alternative filmmakers. In Luvaas's view, it is rather the political focus that has changed. After the youth movement successfully helped to overthrow Suharto, they started to invest in a "politics of access and mobility" (Luvaas 2012, 127). The young cultural producers have since acted out their autonomy, enjoying full control over their creative expressions, both aesthetically and content-wise, as they have begun to explore themes that were forbidden under the New Order regime. In this sense, Indonesian youth, and in particular the cultural producers among them, are indeed political. In fact, through the spirit of reform they learned to speak out and to voice their hopes and concerns. As we will see, there are different ways to engage in activism and politics, that is, to "enact political subjectivities" and become "activist citizens" (Isin 2009). Whereas the new mainstream filmmakers enacted their political subjectivities by forming a political movement to fight for the abolishment of the outdated New Order Film Law no. 8/1992, alternative spaces and film communities form an aesthetic movement and engage in contextual activism.

The New Mainstream Goes Political

In the absence of a functioning film industry, the four *Kuldesak* directors and I-Sinema members, once the forefront of *film independen*, soon became the new mainstream. Whereas the I-Sinema movies were met with little interest at the national level, Riri Riza's film *Petualangan Sherina* (The Adventure of Sherina, 2000) did find success. In fact, *Sherina* was a real breakthrough that ended the stagnant condition of the Indonesian film industry. This family film contained the right mixture of adventure, drama, and musical to draw the interest of Indonesian spectators (Imanjaya 2009). With ticket sales of 1.6 million, *Sherina*

[33] I would add Mouly Surya as one of the new female directors to watch.

was a huge box-office hit. Another highly successful production was the teenage love story *Ada Apa dengan Cinta* (What's up with Love, 2002) by Rudy Soedjarwo, which even surpassed the box-office success of *Sherina.*

Many of the producers who were hitherto investing solely in television formats drew hope from the unexpected success of *Ada Apa* and *Sherina* and returned to the newly established cinema market. As a result of the growing number and success of Indonesian feature films, in 2004 the government decided to re-launch the Indonesian Film Festival (FFI), which had been forced to stop in 1992 due to a lack of domestic films to compete for the awards (Ratna 2007, 305; Yuliawan 2012).

All seemed rosy for the industry, but as Nan Achnas writes in her Jakarta Post article *Rebirth of Indonesian Film Industry, and the Glaring Lack of Creativity* (2007), this was far from the case. Achnas notes that the film industry is still facing many problems, including "Outdated regulations, censorship, financial constraints on filmmakers, a shaky film infrastructure and a lack of support for film education." Achnas wrote her opinion piece in response to a plagiarism scandal that occurred during the 2006 Indonesian Film Festival (IFF). A large group of filmmakers (among them Riri Riza, Mira Lesmana, Nia Dinata, Hanung Bramantyo, and Shanty Harmayn) protested the decision of the IFF to honor the film *Eksul* (Extra Curricular, dir. Nayato Fio Nuala, 2006) with two Citra Awards for best director and best picture, despite the fact that the film illegally used copyrighted music from several Hollywood movies, such as *Gladiator* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* (Imanjaya 2009). Many of the protesting filmmakers returned their own awards from previous years.

Instead of leaving protests at a singular symbolic act, the group formed the Indonesian Film Community (MFI, Masyarakat Film Indonesia). The MFI very quickly became a unified and structured political movement that aimed to push the government to reform its outdated national film policy and, more importantly, to abolish the film Censorship Board (LSF, Lembaga Sensor Film) in favor of a film classification system. The MFI critiqued not only the obvious unprofessionalism and poor quality of the films shown at the IFF but also the government's unwillingness to support and further develop the Indonesian film industry. As Kusuma (2008) emphasizes, although the Department of Information was dissolved during early *Reformasi,* allowing for greater freedom of expression*,* the LSF was kept in place and is, in fact, the only New Order institution that was not dismantled in the course of the political transformation. The MFI formed different working groups and suggested changes for the reformation of film policy to the House of

the People's Representatives (DPR). The movement also pushed for the replacement of the Film Law No. 8/1992 with a less restrictive regulation that would allow the industry to thrive. Despite these efforts, the MFI was not successful with their initiative. Their request to abolish the film censorship system was denied altogether. Although the DPR passed a new film law in September 2009, Film Law No. 33/2009 (Undang-Undang No. 33/2009 tentang Perfilman), it had been neither fundamentally reworked nor modernized, but rather in essence maintained the same repressive paradigm of the New Order (Imanjaya 2009; Paramaditha 2012).

The IFF incident and the subsequent judicial review of Film Law No. 8/1992 illustrate clearly how the new generation of filmmakers were performing acts of citizenship through their involvement in the MFI. Isin defines these acts as "making a difference," further claiming that "We make a difference when we break routines, understandings and practices" (2009, 379). It is precisely the actualization of ruptures in the status quo of the current film policy that transformed the young filmmakers into both political activists and citizens. First they resisted the old generation of filmmakers, and then they ruptured the legacy of New Order film regulations (see also Kusuma 2008). Importantly, acts of citizenship are not defined here on the basis of success, since ultimately the filmmakers failed to comprehensively reform film policy, but solely on the basis of marking a beginning, that is, of "enact[ing] oneself as that being that makes a beginning," as Isin (2009, 380), following Hanna Arendt, argues.

The Contextual Activism of Alternative Spaces and Film Communities

Compared to the new mainstream of Indonesian filmmakers, the members of alternative spaces and film communities form less a political movement than an aesthetic one. This does not mean, however, that they are not political or that they cannot also be seen as activist citizens. With the commercialization of Indonesian cinema, the members of alternative film communities and alternative spaces soon emancipated themselves from the former Alternatives. Alternative spaces like Kinoki and the *kolektif kreatif* ruangrupa became the alternative to the Alternative. This division was very obvious in the aforementioned attempt by the MFI to reform the film industry, as the MFI lacked strong support from film communities and alternative spaces (Juliastuti 2009). The alternatives did not identify with the political movement of the mainstream filmmakers, which placed heavy emphasis on engaging the state in the betterment of the industry. Most of the alternatives have

preferred to remain independent from state institutions. Instead of a vertical political engagement between state and society, they have engaged horizontally with the communities around them. In an interview with Hendro Wiyanto (2005), ruangrupa co-founder Ade Darmawan comments as follows,

> We see the relationship to the public sphere more horizontally, as more permeable in both directions, and not distanced; we see ourselves more in the position of a collaborator than as furnishers, negotiators, or mediators. With this viewpoint, we have no difficulties entering the "real" world of everyday life as a main component of the work (art).

Horizontal engagement here also means seeking to improve the infrastructure at the local level, or to put it differently, to perform contextual activism. In another interview (Juliastuti 2012), Ade further describes this specific form of activism:

> The organizations develop relevant visual art practices to local social problems. They work as fixers. … I prefer to look at the works of initiative spaces as 'contextual responses.' Performing a series of experiments in their local environments, they develop an applicable model to respond to local needs. Such contextual responses, occurring in different places and sometimes short-lived, develop into local survival strategies. In the absence of formal art infrastructure, they work to improve the local system.

In contrast to the political movement of the MFI, alternative spaces practice arts and activism from below by directly engaging and collaborating with local communities on the ground and by fixing shortcomings through creative and educational measures like workshops for *kampung* (suburb) youth, public film screenings, and local festivities (see Juliastuti 2012). Thus, creative practices are mainly developed as a response to the specific needs of a community, which runs counter to the elitist idea of "art for art's sake." In this sense, Juliastuti may be correct to refer to certain initiatives and artistic strategies employed by ruangrupa (and in my view, this is equally true of other alternative spaces and film communities) as "emergency activism," a term she borrows from Melani Budianta (2003). Through emergency activism, alternative spaces and film communities not only address or respond to urgent sociopolitical needs at the local level but also intervene on the discursive level. For example, ruangrupa's *Karbon* journal is an (emergency) initiative intended to fill the void of critical cultural analyses of visual art in Indonesia (Wiyanto 2005; Juliastuti 2012).

In terms of their use of audiovideo technologies, ruangrupa can also be grouped under the category of "experimental video activism," which Thajib and Juliastuti (2009, 182) define as "activism based on technological experimentation and deconstruction of imagery as a means for shifting the relation between the audiences and the medium."

Besides ruangrupa, many other creative communities recognize the potential of audiovisual technologies as a tool for self-determination and social change, producing a large number of documentaries, educational films for advocacy, and grassroots community films, as well as more radical activist videos and video art (see also Hafiz 2011; Hughes-Freeland 2011; van Heeren 2012). In the tradition of citizen media many of the *komunitas film* use video for both social and political mobilization.

Thajib and Juliastuti (2009) have created a comprehensive map of video activism in contemporary Indonesia through which they have identified three main political video-based practices: tactical video activism, grassroots video activism, and the aforementioned experimental video activism of ruangrupa and Forum Lenteng. One of the first groups that understood the emancipatory potential of documentary filmmaking and engaged the medium in tactical ways to influence public opinion was the Jakarta-based media collective Off-Stream, founded by filmmaker Lexy Rambadeta in 2001, which promoted itself as "the voice of the voiceless." Among the other organizations that aim to influence key decision-makers and can thus be grouped together under the category of "tactical video activism" are KoPI in Bandung and Gekko Studio in Bogor (Thajib and Juliastuti 2009, 182: FN 14). Among the groups that work at the grassroots level and seek social transformations through the use of participatory video are Kampung Halaman and Etnoreflika in Yogyakarta, Kawanusa in Bali, and Aryo Danusiri's Ragam in Jakarta (Thajib and Juliastuti 2009, 182, FN 12; see also van Heeren 2009; Hafiz 2011; Hughes-Freeland 2011).

This brief overview of contextual activism suggests that the members of alternative spaces and film communities enact themselves as activist citizens by making a difference at the local level. Whereas the MFI has formed a strong pressure group engaging in rights activism on the (national) level of high-profile politics, the alternatives have so far shown little interest in intervening in the process of policy making. The latter stance has not gone unchallenged, however. Juliastuti (2009) suggests that the impact of alternative spaces and film communities is very limited. In her view, the movement of alternative spaces "has failed to bring its existence to a broader scale, and to transform its spirit into new critical voices. The alternative spaces and communities are not united or powerful enough."

According to many critics, what is missing among the young creatives is a clear vision and long-term strategy, something that is rather antithetical to the character of emergency activism, which is mainly focused on informal and temporary initiatives (Budianta 2002). A further serious problem, as Ade Darmawan (cited in Juliastuti 2012)

notes, is the lack of "an alternative network that serves as a platform for organizations, which share the same vision to strengthen the bargaining positions within wider social, cultural and political contexts." This shortcoming was also addressed at the National Congress of Community-Based Film Activities (Kongres Nasional Kegiatan Film Berbasis Komunitas), which took place from the 17 to 20 March 2010 in Solo, Central Java.[34] The congress report states that one of the purposes of the meeting was the "strategic political positioning within the framework of development of Indonesian cinema, especially in the realm of culture, responding to Law No.33/2009."[35] Dimas Jayasrana (2013), who was one of the initiators and co-organizers of the congress, also stresses that one of the main reasons for bringing together the different *komunitas film* was to make them aware of their political function and the importance of taking a political and critical standpoint in relation to both the cinema landscape and the state. It remains to be seen what the future holds for the domestic film industry.

What I hope to have shown in this section is that questions of politics in contemporary Indonesian cinema should be approached more broadly and flexibly than they are at present. Malaysian visual artist and educator Wong Hoy Cheong offers a neat summary of this position by noting that the arts do not always need to "touch on social or political issues," as "the very act of creating art, is an act of liberation" (Cheong, cited in Mandal 2003, 194). In my view, this holds true for Indonesia today, particularly for local communities far away from the Jakarta-centered film establishment.

In the final section of this chapter I want to move the focus from film mediation practices to cinematic representations. Given the focus of this dissertation, I am particularly interested in how the new activist citizens imagine alternative sexualities and identity formation in post-Suharto Indonesia and how this is reflected on screen. What are the ruptures and continuities in the portrayal of sexual difference in contemporary Indonesian film?

The Portrayal of Same-Sex Sexuality in Indonesian Film

The burgeoning depiction of gay, and to a lesser extend *waria* and lesbian, characters in contemporary Indonesian cinema can be seen as part of the general redefinition of gender

[34] According to the report, 130 individuals and *komunitas film* from Java, Sumatra, and Borneo attended the congress.

[35] *Mencari posisi politik yang strategis dalam kerangka pengembangan perfilman Indonesia terutama dalam ranah kebudayaan, menanggapi UU No.33/2009.*

and sexuality in democratizing Indonesia (see Chapter 5). This new development is also reflected in the growing news coverage of topics related to homosexuality both on television (Hendrawan 2009) and in print media (Boellstorff 2005; Blackwood 2007, 2010). Indonesianist and film scholar Ben Murtagh (2013) has identified at least 35 domestic films produced between 1998 and 2009 that portray alternative sexualities and genders. In the last four years, at least eight more films of this sort have been produced. However, this figure includes only mainstream full-length fiction films that have been cleared by the censorship board and screened in commercial movie theaters. Films that have not been released commercially in Indonesia and that only played in national and international film festivals or in alternative spaces are not included in this calculation.

Recent years have witnessed increasing scholarly interest in the cinematic portrayal of gays, lesbians, and *warias,* as well as of characters that might be read as such.[36] For this section, I will confine my attention to three fiction films portraying women-who-love-women, namely *Detik Terakhir* (*Final Second,* dir. Nanang Istiabudi, 2005), *Berbagi Suami* (Love for Share, dir. Nia Dinata, 2006), and *Minggu Pagi di Victoria Park* (Sunday Morning in Victoria Park, dir. Lola Amaria, 2010). Taking Murtagh's analysis of *Gadis Metropolis* (Metropolitan Girls, dir. Slamet Riyadi, 1993) as an example, I will also examine how films produced in the post-Suharto era portray women-who-love-women differently from New Order films.

Ben Murtagh has undertaken the important task of looking at the representation of alternative genders and sexualities in New Order cinema, offering a much more nuanced reading of these films than any other critic. In his book *Genders and Sexualities in Indonesian Cinema,* Murtagh (2013) refers to a number of New Order films—from as early as the 1970s up to the erotic movies of the 1990s—that have a lesbian storyline or female homoeroticism. Among the earlier films are *Jang Djatuh Dikaki Lelaki* (Those Who Fall at Men's Feet, dir. Nico Pelamonia, 1971), *Tiada Maaf Bagimu* (There's No Forgiveness for You, dir. M Sharieffudin, 1971), *Perawan-Perawan* (Virgins, dir. Ida Farida, 1981), *Titian Serambut Dibelah Tujuh* (The Narrow Bridge, dir. Chaerul Umam, 1982), and *Catatan Si Boy III* (Boy's Diary III, dir. Nasry Cheppy, 1990). The lesbian theme continued in the highly popular "Metropolitan Girls" movies, *Gadis Metropolis* (Metropolitan Girls, dir. Slamet

[36] See Murtagh (2006, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2013), Widjaya (2007), Maimunah (2008a, 2008b, 2010, 2011), Coppens (2009a, 2012), Imanjaya (2009), Hughes-Freeland (2011), Paramaditha (2011b).

Riyadi, 1993), *Gadis Metropolis II* (Metropolitan Girls II, dir. Bobby Sandy, 1994), and *Pergaulan Metropolis* (Metropolitan Relationships, dir. Acok Rahman, 1994).

According to Murtagh (2011, 101), it was *Gadis Metropolis* that first gave prominence to lesbian characters. Set in Jakarta's upper-middle-class milieu, the film tells the story of three young and stylish female friends, Lisa, Fanny, and Sandra. After a violent break-up with her boyfriend Jacky, Lisa gets involved in a same-sex relationship with Mirna, an older woman. When things go awry between the two, Lisa decides to go back to Jacky. In a fit of jealousy, Mirna attempts to kill Lisa, but luckily her friend Fanny saves the day. The film ends in highly dramatic fashion with Mirna stabbing Jacky to death and subsequently being sent to prison (Murtagh 2013, 102f). With its rather unsympathetic representation of female "deviant sexualities" (*kelainan seksual*), *Gadis Metropolis* resembles the stereotypical depiction of lesbians, very common in Western mainstream movies, "as inherently perverse and monstrous" (Hanson 1999, 2). The murderous Mirna, in particular, resembles the violent female characters that Lynda Hart (1994) discusses in her book *Fatal Women: Lesbian Sexuality and the Mark of Aggression*. Whilst this violent depiction of lesbians was completely abandoned in post-New Order films, the second lesbian image in *Gadis Metropolis,* that of "the abused lesbi who only finds meaning and a restoration of order in her life when she is taken in hand by an upstanding male member of the society" (Murtagh 2011, 111), continues to feature in contemporary films, with *Detik Terakhir* being a conspicuous example.

Detik Terakhir, a loose adaptation of Alberthiene Endah's bestselling novel *Jangan Beri Aku Narkoba* (Don't Give Me Drugs), is the first post-New Order film with a female same-sex-love plot. The film tells the story of Regi and Vela, a lesbian couple fighting to overcome drug addiction. Although the director was applauded for his courage in addressing the topic of female same-sex love, the reaction to the film among critics was rather negative. According to Maimunah (2008b, 56f), this was mainly due to the clichéd depiction of women-who-love-women as drug addicts and the association of "lesbianism" with mental disorder, a typical trope of New Order films. In contrast to other filmmakers of the young generation, who overtly stated that they wanted to show lesbian lives in stark detail, the producer of *Detik Terakhir*, Shanker R.S., made it very clear that the film was first and foremost an educational anti-drug movie and not a tale of lesbian love (Linden 2006). Indeed, one of the lesbian protagonists dies at the end of the film, a plot device that perpetuates the widespread public opinion that desiring the same sex is deviant (*kelainan*)

while reaffiriming the popular media notion that all gays and lesbians have an "unhealthy homosexual lifestyle" (see Boellstorff 2005; Blackwood 2010). With the denial of a happy ending, the film continues along the lines of the dead lesbian syndrome to be found in many early Western and New Order films alike. Despite the largely depressing depiction of the two women in *Detik Terakhir*, Maimunah (2008b, 149) still finds a way to read the film positively. In her view, the film is successful in subverting the normative ideal of Indonesian heterosexist and patriarchal society. The relationship between Regi and Vela, one based on affection and care, appears somewhat "natural," offering room for the imagination of an alternative family model and thereby allowing lesbian spectators to identify with the characters on screen (ibid., 127).

The first real break with the stereotypical New Order portrayals of female same-sex sexuality was brought about by Nia Dinata's three-story film *Berbagi Suami*.[37] As with *Arisan!* (The Gathering, dir. Nia Dinata, 2003) before it, Nia Dinata also earns credit for the first sympathetic and progressive depiction of women-who-love-women in post-1998 Indonesian cinema, doing for lesbians what *Arisan!* did for gay guys. Although the lesbian storyline in *Berbagi Suami* is not as central as the gay coming-out story in *Arisan!*, it is equally revolutionary. *Berbagi Suami* addresses the controversial topic of polygamy and its effects on women's lives in Indonesia. Set in Jakarta, the film focuses on the experiences of the three protagonists, Salma, Siti, and Ming. Coming from diverse social, cultural, ethnic, religious, and economic backgrounds, each character has a specific way of dealing with her polygamous marriage. The film adopts the women's point of view in order to explore different aspects of polygamy. With its strong female perspective—both in front of and behind the camera—*Berbagi Suami* differs significantly from the New Order films, in which most female characters had a subordinate and passive role. Indeed, as Sen (1994, 134) argues, "Some genres of Indonesian films are precisely about seeing the woman, but not about the woman seeing or speaking."

Given my focus on female same-sex love, here I wish to examine the lesbian relationship depicted in the second segment of the film. The main character, Siti, is a Javanese village girl who comes to the city to pursue her dream of becoming a beautician. As Siti has no place to stay, she moves in with her uncle Pak Lik, a film-crew driver, who lives with two wives, Sri and Dwi, and a troupe of children in a small two-bedroom house

[37] For a discussion of *Berbagi Suami*, especially in regard to the polygamy theme, see Hatley (2009), Imanjaya (2009), Kurnia (2009), Sulistyani (2010), Hughes-Freeland (2011, 224-226), and Chin (2012).

in a poor *kampung* of Jakarta. Without means and having no other real choice, Siti accepts Pak Lik's marriage proposal and becomes his third wife. Innocent Siti has great difficulties adapting to the polygamous lifestyle, which includes sharing the husband, children, and household duties. Moreover, being sexually inexperienced, she suffers greatly from her husband's constant sexual demands and insensitive behavior. Whenever Pak Lik makes sexual advances toward her she feels miserable. The only happy moments are the ones she shares with her co-wife Dwi. Over time, the two women develop an emotionally deep and sexually intimate relationship. When Pak Lik returns from a trip to Aceh with a fourth wife, Siti convinces Dwi to leave the over-crowded house and start a new life with her. The story ends with the couple running away from Pak Lik's house in the early morning, taking with them Dwi's two children.

The protagonists' courageous decision to escape the polygamous marriage in order to live a self-determined, emotionally and sexually fulfilling life comes as a surprise. This "self-actualization," as Barbara Hatley (2009, 59) calls it, is a rebellious act against the ever-pervasive ideology of the patriarchal family. The positive ending also gives the encouraging message that women have the right to control their own bodies and the power to take their matters into their own hands. Nia Dinata successfully breaks with the New Order state ideology of "follow the husband" (*ikut suami*) (Suryakusuma 1996) and introduces the hitherto unthinkable possibility of what I accordingly call "follow the wife" (*ikut istri*). *Berbagi Suami* not only goes beyond the common pathological view of "lesbian deviance" but also offers an alternative to the normative model of heterosexual relationships and families: a lesbian couple as parents. Furthermore, as Murtagh (2013, 145) argues, the film successfully breaks with the New Order tradition of demonizing female sexuality not only because the couple survives to the end of the film, but also because "their subjectivities derive from a burgeoning awareness of mutual desire, rather than from previous trauma at the hands of men in the form of rape or other violent abuse." In contrast to the dramatic and deadly ending in male-directed films like *Detik Terakhir*, Dinata shows us, for the first time in Indonesian cinema, a happy and affirmative ending for a female same-sex couple.

Equally committed to the rights of LGBT people is the actress-turned-director and producer Lola Amaria.[38] In her first feature film, *Minggu Pagi di Victoria Park*, Amaria explores the lives of young Indonesian migrant workers (Tenaga Kerja Indonesia, TKI) in Hong Kong, most of whom serve as domestic workers (*pembantu rumah tangga*). In addition to tracing the ups and downs of the characters, who have to deal with outstanding debts and abusive partners, the film also depicts female same-sex couples as a natural part of the community of Indonesian migrant workers (see also Malia 2010). The title of the film refers to the many Indonesian (and other Southeast Asian) migrant workers who meet on Sundays in Hong Kong's Victoria Park to spend their only available leisure time in the company of likeminded people.[39] Although female same-sex love in *Minggu Pagi di Victoria Park* is largely portrayed in nonjudgmental ways and dealt with as something common in society, the trope of the dead lesbian has yet to be overcome. Near the end of the film, Yati, who was economically abused by her jobless butch partner, leaving her desperately indebted to the credit institution Super Credit, commits suicide by jumping off a bridge. The only difference here: the lesbian death resulted not from accident or illness but from the self-determined decision of the protagonist.

To sum up, in contrast to the mostly affirmative and positive depictions of (elite and middle-class) gay characters in contemporary Indonesian films,[40] the representation of women-who-love-women generally takes place in less privileged, mainly lower-class, and more discriminatory settings. Also notable is the fact that the number of films with a lesbian storyline or lesbian subjects has not risen significantly since 1998. It comes as no surprise then that gay characters clearly outnumber lesbians in contemporary Indonesian cinema. This reflects what White (2008, 1) calls the "lesbian feature problem," alluding to the lack of feature films made by and about lesbians, which is a problem not only for the

[38] In 2012, Lola Amaria and Fira Sofiana produced *Sanubari Jakarta* (English title: Jakarta Deep Down), an anthology of short films about same-sex love by ten Indonesian directors. The film was the result of a collaboration between the Kresna Duta Foundation, the Ardhanary Institute, and the Ford Foundation and had a limited release in Indonesia's main cinema chains, Blitzmegaplex and Cinema 21. Three of the ten short films—namely, *Lumba-Lumba* (Dolphins, dir. Lola Amaria), *Terhubung* (Connected, dir. Alfrits John Robert), and *Pembalut* (Sanitary Napkin, dir. Billy Christian)—portrayed lesbian love. Additionally, two films addressed the issue of transgenderism and female masculinity: *Untuk A* (With A, dir. Fira Sofiana), which is about a female-to-male (F2M) transgender person; and *Topeng Srikandi* (Srikandi's Mask, dir. Kirana Larasati), which tells the story of a cross-dressing female.

[39] See Sim (2010) for a detailed analysis of same-sex relationships among Indonesian domestic migrant workers.

[40] See Murtagh (2013) for a deep analysis of a number of mainstream films featuring gay characters.

Indonesian film industry but also for global cinema. Generally speaking, the proliferation of alternative genders and sexual minorities on the Indonesian silver screen does not automatically mean less stereotyping and negative representations. The new portrayals, however, are often more varied and in some cases more complex. The most progressive depictions of lesbian couples and same-sex desire are those created by female filmmakers like Nia Dinata and Lola Amaria, both of whom are part of the new wave of successful and influential women shaking up the post-1998 Indonesian film world (*dunia sinema Indonesia*) as directors, producers, and scriptwriters, among other roles (Sen 2005; Sulistyano 2009; Hughes-Freeland 2011).

Conclusion

This chapter has briefly mapped the cinematic landscape in post-New Order Indonesia. It looked at the birth of independent cinema and the subsequent proliferation of a domestic film festival circuit and alternative spaces for film exhibition and distribution. It also showed how *Reformasi* has changed film mediation practices and the content of film texts. As was pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, new digital audiovisual technologies were as much part of these new developments as the socio-political transformation. Digital filmmaking has become an important part of the Indonesian DIY youth movement.

Reformasi has also produced new citizen subjects who are politically aware and enact a new figure of citizenship: the "activist citizen." It has been shown how the new generation of Indonesian filmmakers has performed different acts of citizenship. The new mainstream formed a political movement to challenge film policy, while alternative spaces and *komunitas film* worked in the field of cultural politics by engaging in contextual activism at the grassroots level. Following Isin (2009, 17), I have argued that both examples of acts of citizenship are political insofar as they constitute actors who claim rights.

With regard to new cinematic representations, I have shown that although there persist some ambivalence toward homosexuality in many contemporary productions, we can observe more affirmative as well as more openly cinematic negotiations with alternative sexualities than before. It is striking, though not entirely surprising, that male directors are more likely to pathologize lesbian characters and to kill them off before the end of the film. They seem generally more biased toward heterosexuality. In contrast, female directors are more likely disrupt the New Order trajectory and subvert heteronormativity by affirming

same-sex relationships between women, positively presenting them as an integral part of Indonesian society.

Having given an account of the new Indonesian cinema and the alternative film scene, in the next chapter I will discuss the making of *Anak-Anak Srikandi*. In a way, this collaborative film was made possible by the changing role of women in the film industry. Indeed, the rise of female practitioners in the post-New Order film industry is evident not only in fiction cinema but also in documentary filmmaking (Hughes-Freeland 2011, 432f; see also Sen 2005; Sulistyani 2010; Michalik 2013). Just as in feature film productions, many female documentary filmmakers aimed to expand the range of voices and experiences represented in the genre by portraying more nuanced characters and sexualities (Hughes-Freeland 2011).

In what follows I will explore how the directors of *Anak-Anak Srikandi* enact citizenship through the self-conscious use of film, providing insights into alternative ways of being-in-the-world. In doing so, I continue to develop my basic argument that cinema has become an increasingly important social arena for the construction and redefinition of a democratizing Indonesia.

PART TWO:
THE ACTIVIST SCREEN

CHAPTER 3

THE MAKING OF ANAK-ANAK SRIKANDI

> *Despite the participants' different backgrounds, it was amazing for me to see social and religious borders vanish right from the beginning, while commitment and true interest in the other women's experiences arose. Although most of them had never worked with film before, it was quite easy for everybody to get used to the technique, do the acting, and transform personal experience into the medium of film.* (Angelika Levi, co-director and co-producer of Anak-Anak Srikandi)

Feminist geographers Karen Falconer Al-Hindi and Hope Kawabata (2002, 114) make the following important point about self-reflexivity in research and writing:

> Writing about research conducted in the more fully reflexive mode … requires that the researcher identify and locate herself, not just in the research, but also in the writing. She must be willing to wire and to re-live discomforting experiences, to look awkward and feel ill at ease. She must commit to paper and thus to the scrutiny of peers and others that which she might prefer to forget.

While self-reflexive practices are often critiqued as narcissistic "navel-gazing," I concur with Falconer Al-Hindi and Kawabata's argument that the critical examination of issues like positionality and power relations during research and/or in the creation of visual media adheres to the ethical commitments we as anthropologists/filmmakers make in the first place. I suggest that situating *Anak-Anak Srikandi* within this framework of an "ethics of self-reflective questioning" (Madison 2005, 99) helps to illuminate the power dynamics that directly influenced the outcome of the project and ultimately shaped the political and aesthetic essence of the final cinematic product.

In this chapter, I wish to discuss the collaborative process of creating *Anak-Anak Srikandi* at some length, emphasizing the transformative and empowering potential of its making as part of a broader critical and ethical feminist methodology that seeks to "expose the unequal distribution of power that has subordinated women in most if not all cultures and [to] discover ways of dismantling hierarchies of domination" (Wolf 1992, 199).

As was pointed out in the introduction to this dissertation, what becomes apparent from recent accounts in applied visual anthropology (Pink 2004, 2006, 2007, 2011a) is the interventionist quality of the filmmaking process itself. Instead of merely considering the final product as crucial for public intervention and social change, here I want to emphasize

the importance of the process of creation and the emancipatory effects that can be gained through it, especially at the individual level. Engaged filmmaking practice can be seen as "activism-in-the-making" (Coppens 2012), which, through the formation of empowering "communities of practice" (Wenger 1999) and their collaborative intra-relations, creates a space for transformation.

The first part of this chapter sets out the theoretical framework that influenced the design and development of the *Anak-Anak Srikandi* project. I will then go on to describe the diverse stages of the project's practical implementation, from pre-production to post-production. Finally, I critically discuss the ethical challenges that we faced during the making of *Anak-Anak Srikandi* and show how we as a film collective negotiated the slippery terrain of cross-cultural filmmaking. While I believe that my elaborations have important implications for anthropology, the example of *Anak-Anak Srikandi* is also relevant to filmmaking outside academia.

Collaborative and Participatiory Practices: A Brief Overview

Inspired by French filmmaker and anthropologist Jean Rouch ([1973] 2003) and his notion of "shared anthropology" (*anthropologie partagée*), as well as by Sarah Elder's (1995) filmmaking model of "lateral collaboration," during my graduate studies I started to become interested in collaborative approaches to ethnographic film practice. There are many and diverse modes of collaborative and co-creative media production that implement collaboration and participation to varying degrees, from digital storytelling (see, e.g., Lambert 2002; Couldry 2008) to participatory video (see, e.g., Braden 1998; White 2003). As Schneider and Wright (2013, 11) point out, within anthropology the terms, "collaboration" and "participation," "are charged forms of rhetoric that have been subject to much critical scrutiny." The main difference between these words lies in the degree of participation in the process of media production. Whereas participation suggests *taking part*, collaboration aims more toward *co-working* on most if not all stages of production (ibid.). Although participation and collaboration are different practices, they nevertheless share a concern with the politics of representation, seeking to engage empathetically with people's lives.

Collaborative, participatory, and polyvocal methods form a key part of applied visual anthropology practices. These methods are not a new phenomenon but have a long history in audiovisual anthropology and related disciplines. In Europe, Jean Rouch was the

pioneer of collaborative filmmaking. Rouch's collaborative experiments were inspired by Robert Flaherty's participatory practices with Inuit people during the filming of *Nanook of the North* (1922) (Stoller 1992; Rouch [1973]2003). He took Flaherty's early participatory approach, which today is widely regarded as exploitative, in a new direction by actually sharing authority and filmmaking knowledge with his collaborators. One important part of Rouch's filmmaking ethics and shared anthropology approach was the training offered to those he worked with on his films. As he states, "One solution I propose to this [problem of ownership and cultural distortion] is to train the people with whom you work to be filmmakers. I don't think it's a complete answer, but it has merits in that it leaves the people with something rather than just taking from them" ([1973] 2003, 221).

Rouch's idea of "handing over the camera" became a popular practice in visual anthropology. In the United States, this principle was made famous by the pioneering Navajo Project of Sol Worth and John Adair in 1966.[41] Later, the project's underlying Western bias came under strong fire. Faye Ginsburg (1995b, 262) criticized it for being "sterile" and "patronizing," while Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989, 144) dismissed it as a superficial "charity mission." Its purpose was not to encourage the Navajo people to make films in order to empower them (which she also criticizes as a colonial savior attitude), but instead to teach them how to use film cameras so that the anthropologists could collect data on how the Navajo see themselves (ibid., 138). Minh-ha reminds us that anthropologists should not speak about or for the other, but at best "speak nearby" (Chen 1992 in an interview with Minh-ha).

Despite the legitimate critique, the Navajo Project is still acknowledged as one of the most important early attempts to collaborate directly with indigenous people. Later, many collaborative films assumed a more activist stance, becoming an important part of audiovisual anthropology's major project of "decolonizing ethnographic film" (Lansing 1989). For instance, in their African trilogy *Turkana Conversations,* shot in Kenya in 1973-74, Judith and David MacDougall developed a more inclusive filmmaking practice, employing a "participatory cinema" style.[42]

These early experiments in participation and collaboration foreshadowed community films and autonomous indigenous media productions, which emerged in the early 1980s and were concerned primarily with the political and activist agendas of

[41] Worth and Adair later discussed their project in the book *Through Navajo Eyes* (1972).
[42] David MacDougall explains his approach of "participatory cinema," which he later developed further into his notion of "intertextual cinema," in *Beyond Observational Cinema* ([1975] 1998).

indigenous self-determination.[43] There are also numerous examples of filmmaker-anthropologists making films with and for native communities. Among the more famous are two projects based in Brazil: the Video in the Village Project started in 1987 by activist Vincent Carelli (Aufderheide 1995) and the Kayapo Video Project initiated in 1990 by anthropologist Terence Turner (1991). In the early 1980s, Eric Michaels (1986) collaborated with Walpiri people of the Central Australian Desert on the creation of their own alternative television programs.[44]

One of the most celebrated participatory undertakings in the field of community development practice has been the Fogo Project, which was developed as part of the "Challenge of Change Program" initiated by the National Film Board of Canada in 1967. The filmmaking practice and its principles of participation, reflexivity, advocacy, and empowerment became known as the "Fogo process." At its heart lay the idea that film and video catalyze social change (Ruby 2000, 209). Famous for its community mobilization, the "Fogo process" marked the start of video advocacy, which later became known as participatory video (or community video) (Lansing 1989; Wiesner 1992; White 2003). In her comprehensive book *Participatory Video: Images that Transform and Empower*, Shirley White (2003, 64) defines participatory video as follows:

> Participatory video as a process is a tool for individual, group, and community development. It can serve as a powerful force for people to see themselves in relation to the community and become conscientized about personal and community needs. It brings about a critical awareness that forms the foundation for creativity and communication. Thus it has the potential to bring about personal, social, political and cultural change. That's what video power is all about.

Participatory video and collaboritative filmmaking are not only powerful tools for affecting change, raising awareness, and building community; they also enable marginalized groups to present themselves and actively participate in knowledge production.

The development of new collaborative and participatory media representations also grew out of a general leftist environment that aimed at the decentralization of capitalistic mainstream media. Feminist filmmakers, radical film collectives, and Third Cinema filmmakers[45] from Latin America, all of whom had been strongly influenced by the emancipatory ideas of Paulo Freire and his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* ([1970] 1996), produced a wide range of alternative media.

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[43] See Ginsburg (1995b) for a discussion of indigenous media as an emerging genre.

[44] For a more contemporary community media project in Australia, see Jennifer Deger's *Shimmering Screens: Making Media in an Aboriginal Community* (2006).

[45] For more on the theory and practice of Third Cinema, see Guneratne and Dissanayake (2003).

Gailey (1998) has identified engagement and equal collaborative relationships as defining aspects of feminist methodology.[46] At its heart are non-hierarchical methods that challenge existing power structures and hegemonic knowledge, as well as films or research that are of relevance to wider society and that bring about positive transformations for the subject-participants involved—or, to put it briefly, that make a difference (Pink 2001; Kindon 2003; Sultana 2007). As Sara Kindon (2003, 143) notes, "This collaborative and negotiated use of video has considerable transformative potential, not only in terms of the action it may generate, but also in terms of the structure of relationships between the researcher and research participants."

Although participatory image-making practices are developed within an ethical framework that seeks to dismantle hierarchies and level power imbalances between the filmmaker and the filmed, the issue of power needs to be considered for every new project. Therefore, the ideal of an "equal place of power," as described by Sarah Elder (1995), is never a given, but has to be developed and negotiated over and over again. It has often been claimed that filmmaking is by nature collaborative, but I argue that the degrees of collaboration can vary significantly between projects. It is not uncommon to encounter initiatives where collaboration is relegated to a mere buzzword lacking any of its initial political meaning (Cooke & Kothari 2001). Jay Ruby lists a number of requirements that have to be met for audiovisual productions to be genuine collaborations. These include collective decision making from production through post-production to the distribution process, technical training of participants, equal division of labor, control of funding, and the sharing of royalties.

Thus far, I have set out the background to and theoretical influences behind the *Anak-Anak Srikandi* project. My methodology was shaped by audiovisual anthropological approaches to collaborative filmmaking, as well as by participatory video and feminist methodology. In the following section, I will discuss the practical implementation of the project and the on-the-ground collaborations that led to the creation of *Anak-Anak Srikandi*. By disclosing the "complex mechanics of collaboration" (Ruby 2000, 208) in written form, I address the lack of extensive documentation about collaborative filmmaking practices in audiovisual anthropology. I thereby make the nature of our collaboration available for critical examination by others.

[46] For a discussion of feminist ethnography, see Abu-Lughod (1990), Reinharz (1992), Wolf (1992), and Behar (2003).

Doing Collaborative Filmmaking[47]

Anak-Anak Srikandi is the result of a lengthy process of constant negotiation, idea sharing, revision, and critique. Over the two years of its creation, the film work became an increasingly collective act, resembling the kind of collaboration described by Sarah Elder (1995, 94) as "creating an open space for dialogue." The collective and multi-authored approach to media production to which we (the film collective) aspired implied various ways of collaborating at different levels of the production process, from the development of the individual scripts at one end to editing at the other.

In this section, I describe each of the three fundamental stages of film production in more detail. First, I outline the different steps that were taken during the movie's preproduction, including researching the topic, developing the concept and style, writing a treatment, and composing a budget for the overall project, as well as fundraising, looking for collaborators, and gathering additional crew in Indonesia. I write from my position as anthropologist, workshop facilitator, producer, co-director, assistant editor, and participant-observer.

Preproduction

Film Concept

The conception of the overall project as a workshop film was motivated by my wish for less hierarchical anthropological filmmaking that redresses the power imbalance between visual anthropologist and participants. Instead of going "there" to film the "Other," I sought to make an anthology film consisting of several short episodes created by the participating Indonesian women themselves. As I wanted to reach out to as many women of diverse backgrounds as possible, and since these women were not likely to have had any prior training in filmmaking or video production, part of the research concept was the organization of a workshop that would provide the participants with the skills necessary to produce their own videos.

The strategic decision to organize a workshop naturally shapes the style of the film as a whole and its overall performative and participatory aesthetic. Importantly, the compilation of a multitude of perspectives into one anthology avoids common simplistic portrayals and the tendency to homogenize the "queer Other" in mainstream media. The

[47] Parts of this section were published in Coppens (2013a).

women were asked to tell stories from their everyday lives to create a nuanced picture of the genders and sexualities encountered in Indonesia. However, the aim was not only to produce a diverse range of short autoethnographies and exhibit them alongside one another, but also to bring the individual episodes together in a meaningful way, uniting them into an overall storyline.

During my preliminary research for the film project, I came across the tale of Srikandi, a fascinating and popular heroine from the Mahabharata, one of India's two major epics, who frequently features in traditional Indonesian shadow puppet plays (*wayang kulit*).[48] Whereas in India the character is known as Shikhandi, in Java she is referred to as Srikandi. There exist many different Srikandi narratives throughout Java, which vary according to the region and depend, moreover, on the interpretation of the puppeteer and storyteller (*dalang*). Furthermore, I learned that Srikandi is a role model for many Indonesian LGBT and feminist activists. The popularity of the Srikandi tale derives from the fact that it serves as important "historical evidence of women's autonomous sexual practices" (Wieringa 2009, 207). Therefore, the tale and other historical evidence is used by many women's groups "to strengthen their own self-esteem and to remind their governments and the wider societies of practices and relations they so far conveniently ignored or demonized" (ibid.).

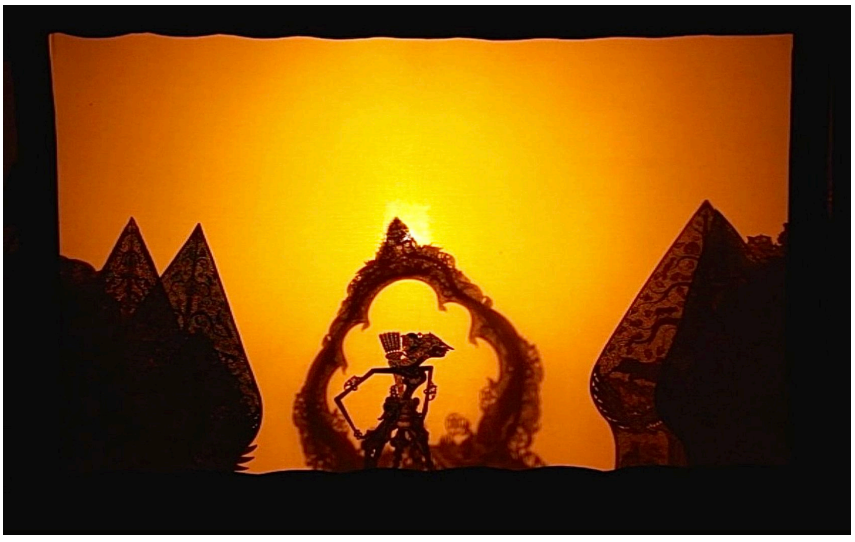

Figure 1: Srikandi the female warrior as shadow puppet

Srikandi is one of the few female *wayang* figures who is not a passive devoted mother and wife but a rebellious independent fighter. She is a female warrior, the ultimate model of

[48] Literally, *wayang* means shadow and *kulit* leather or skin.

independent womanhood: strong, brave, heroic, and active (Wieringa 2000; Blackwood 2005). Having had countless conversations about Srikandi during my first stay in Indonesia, I resolved to move forward with the idea of incorporating her story in the final film. Interweaving the individual biographies of contemporary women with key episodes in Srikandi's life gives *Anak-Anak Srikandi* an important subversive and highly political twist. Srikandi's story is a commentary on the growing occurrence of homophobic threats toward the Indonesian LGBT community. Accordingly, *Anak-Anak Srikandi* shows that same-sex love and gender variety is not a "Western import"—as argued by some conservative religious groups like the Islam Defenders Front (FPI)—but an ancient aspect of Indonesian society. Furthermore, as Wieringa (2009, 207) argues,

> [the] subversive reading of history can serve as a way of opening debates to counter the process of naturalizing a heteronormativity that is so oppressive to those who are "othered", that is, don't conform to this model, and thus fall outside the narrowly defined boundaries of a hegemonic femininity and masculinity.

Figure 2: Puppeteer Suci performing Srikandi's story for the film anthology

In the version of the story performed for our film, Srikandi is neither man nor woman, but rather moves fluidly between the genders. When Srikandi falls in love with princess Larasati, s/he has to understand that the only way to survive is to become a female warrior and fight for her right to love. Puppeteer Soleh (aka) Suci gives her voice to Srikandi, while the singer Anik expresses the character's emotions. Both performers are *waria*, and Srikandi is thus somehow both embodied and represented by them as an inverted mirror image. In the course of the film, they reinvent themselves within the normative framework of

Javanese beauty and the Indonesian perception of a perfect and modest woman. At the same time, the short films, and even Srikandi's story itself, deconstruct the classic Indonesian notion of womanhood. This transgressive and fluid representation of gender subverts the notion of a fixed gender identity and thus the assumed "nature of women" (*kodrat wanita*).

The fluidity of gender is also reflected in the very form and style of *Anak-Anak Srikandi*. The movie's narrative structure does not always allow for a clear division between the individual episodes; instead, they merge together organically. At the same time, the narrative of the *wayang kulit* (which includes interview sections with the puppeteer and singer) moves from fiction to documentary and from past to present. The non-hierarchical agenda is also apparent in the montage, as editor Angelika Levi (2012) explains: "Despite the different lengths of the films and the genres chosen there is no hierarchy. The assembly is based on an associative logic."

So far this chapter has focused on the concept for *Anak-Anak Srikandi*. The following section will discuss the nature of collaboration with partner organizations and the recruitment of film professionals for the workshop.

Collaborating with Partner Organizations

After deciding on the concept of the overall movie, the next step was to find collaborating partners. Of foremost importance was finding local organizations that either were interested in facilitating the workshop or could help to disseminate the call for participants within the LGBT community. First, I contacted In-Docs,[49] a Jakarta-based, foreign-funded non-profit organization that I had already worked with in my capacity as Indonesian film curator for Asian Hot Shots Berlin.

In-Docs was founded in 2002 by US-trained documentary filmmaker Shanty Harmayn, who was also one of the founders of the Jakarta International Film Festival. The organization's main goal is the promotion of documentary films in Indonesia. Furthermore, In-Docs seeks to increase the skills of local documentary filmmakers by offering different kinds of training programs. The driving force behind our collaboration on the *Anak-Anak Srikandi* project was a general interest in exchange between Indonesian and European documentary practitioners. When asked by the website editor of the Asia Documentary

[49] For the In-Docs website, see http://www.in-docs.org/. In-Docs' main sources of international funding were the Ford Foundation and HiVOS.

Network how European documentary filmmakers could help their Indonesian counterparts and what kind of cooperation could be developed, the then managing director of In-Docs, Chandra Tanzil (2010), answered as follows:

> We need more European titles with interesting topics to be screened here in our non-commercial screening programs. But we cannot afford to pay expensive screening fees and its better in the form of DVD in order to reduce the transporting cost. We don't need to get very new released films, but we need high quality and good topics doc films, like what we have done with European embassies and cultural centers here in Jakarta. Europe can help on another ways [sic]. Training is key for the emerging doc makers who already produced 2-3 titles and co-production for some of the filmmakers who already produce for international market.

With this mutual interest in mind, Chandra and I negotiated the nature of our collaboration. Chandra expressed his desire to sit in the workshop sessions in order to learn about the pedagogical methods Anglika and I would employ. Due to the potentially sensitive issues that might be raised during these sessions, however, we decided beforehand that all participants must agree upon the audit. In return, In-Docs offered full assistance with the workshop facilitation. Furthermore, Chandra himself volunteered to give a brief introduction to editing as part of the final workshop session. Additionally, In-Docs employee Sofia Setyorini was assigned as our Indonesian project manager and helped in organizing almost everything related to the workshop. Sofia managed the application process and played a vital role in recruiting participants. For the film production itself, In-Docs provided additional equipment and even secured extra funding later on in the project.

Since the In-Docs office was too small a space in which to conduct a workshop with an estimated ten participants plus instructors and In-Docs staff, Sofia and I approached the Goethe Institute in Jakarta about the possibility of using one of their classrooms. The Goethe Institute agreed to support the *Anak-Anak Srikandi* project and became one of its many sponsors.[50] Sofia and I considered the Goethe Institute an ideal workshop space for several reasons. First, most people (at least the ones we hoped to reach with our call for participants) are familiar with the location. Second, since the Goethe Institute had been one of the host institutions for the local Q! Film Festival for the several years, it was widely considered a safe and liberal space for the expression of issues related to sexuality and gender. Finally, the institute's charming courtyard provides a relaxing atmosphere far away from the hustle and bustle of Jakarta's traffic, making it a very pleasant place in which to work and socialize.

[50] The Goethe Institute's sponsorship was not in the form of cash but in kind, which consisted of the provision of free space for the workshop and an opulent lunch for all participants.

The next step after setting up the collaborations with local organizations was the recruitment of film professionals who would be willing to support me in the laborious task of teaching the fundamentals of filmmaking. It would be the first film workshop that I had conducted with so many participants in a foreign setting. Although I had attended many film workshops myself and was relatively knowledgeable about all stages of the film production process, I had never been to film school and was far from being a film professional. Therefore, I decided to approach the German filmmaker Angelika Levi, whose work I admire and who, most importantly, was used to making films in cross-cultural settings. Angelika accepted my invitation to work as both tutor and editor on the project and remains actively involved to this day.

The recruitment of film professionals was not only a technical decision but also a strategic one. I envisioned *Anak-Anak Srikandi* to be the very first film made by Indonesian women-who-love-women about and for Indonesian women-who-love-women. Given the difficulties of coordinating media production workshops with people who have no prior experience of filmmaking whatsoever, this was definitely an ambitious endeavor. By bringing film professionals on board, I hoped that we could create something that was of high quality, garnering the interest of a broader public beyond Indonesia, and that at the same time would inspire the local LGBT community to follow our example and organize film workshops to tell their stories.

Furthermore, I was seeking a crew that consisted of both Indonesian and German filmmakers, making it a proper co-production. For the introductory session on video camera operation, we were able to recruit the Indonesian director of photography Faozan Rizal, who works mainly on local commercial films but also produces his own films. In addition of being a workshop tutor, Faozan shot some of the more difficult shadow puppet theater scenes.[51]

Recruiting Participants

Besides figuring out the logistics of the workshop, In-Docs and I had to prepare the call for participants. We made a list of local LGBT and human rights organizations and identified Indonesian LGBT newsgroups and websites through which we could disseminate the information. Eventually, we partnered with the Ardhanary Institute, Arus

[51] Other Indonesian artists contributing to *Anak-Anak Srikandi* were Yacko, one of the few Indonesian female hip-hop artists, the animation artist Fety Fithriya, and Bandung-based painter and graphic designer Zeni Nugroho.

Pelangi, Institut Pelangi Perempuan, and Q-munity in Jakarta and the oldest Indonesian LGBT organization, GAYa Nusantara, in Surabaya. Their extensive mailing lists seemed promising for a wide outreach, and we hoped for a reasonable response. Other major recruitment channels included social networking sites like Facebook, where we placed posts on, for instance, the Q! Film Festival fan page.

In the call for participants, we explained the nature and aim of the project along with the requirements for participation. Interested women were asked to submit a one-page proposal or at least some notes on the film idea they had in mind. In order to simplify the proposal writing and help the women to find some topics to focus on, we provided a questionnaire that aimed at encouraging the women to think about and share special moments—be they happy or sad—in their lives and their experience of discrimination, if any, at work or within the family. One question was devoted to the Srikandi character in order to find out what this ancient character means to young women today.

In the course of the application process it became apparent that most of the women had difficulties in articulating their film ideas clearly. This did not pose a problem or disqualify them from participating in the project; to the contrary, it proved a helpful indicator of the topics that required most attention during the workshop. As it turned out, developing cinematic storytelling skills was definitely one of the priorities.

In the end, we had twelve applicants aged between 23 and 35, of whom eight went on to produce their own films. The majority of the women came from Jakarta, three were based in Yogyakarta, and one was from Bandung; most had never met before. Their socioeconomic backgrounds varied from lower middle class to upper middle class. Despite differences in their income levels and educational backgrounds, all participants were more or less familiar with LGBT rights, human rights, and women's rights discourses, as they had either participated in NGO workshops on health, gender, and sexuality, volunteered at the Q! Film Festival in Jakarta, or were already involved in LGBT rights activism. Later, this common ground would prove to be important for creating the open and trustful atmosphere needed for first-person storytelling.

Fundraising

After clarifying all organizational details with In-Docs and the Goethe Institute, our main and most challenging task was fundraising. Although my graduate school, the University Research Priority Program "Asia and Europe" at the University of Zurich, covered my

travel expenses and the cost of some of the video equipment, I had to look for additional funds in order to pay for Angelika Levi's flight and accommodation, as well as for her teaching honorarium and editing fee. Money was also needed to cover the group's food and travel costs.

Due to my previous experience of organizing festivals, I already had some knowledge of fundraising and was able to draw on some of my contacts and networks to seek finances for *Anak-Anak Srikandi*. For the first workshop we received some funding from the Berlin-based Manfred Durniok Foundation. It is especially hard to secure funding in the pre-production phase of a project, when one has nothing to show the potential sponsors. My pre-existing contacts were crucial at this stage, as they appreciated my work and knew that I would do anything to make the project succeed. In the middle of the first workshop we were fortunate to receive unexpected financial support from In-Docs.[52] At the time of our workshop, In-Docs had some surplus funds that needed to be spent. Since they were collaborating with us on *Anak-Anak Srikandi*, In-Docs decided that the easiest way to use these funds effectively was by contributing to our project.

For *Anak-Anak Srikandi*, being a workshop film we required a creative fundraising strategy. For the usual documentary foundations our film seemed too much of a niche-within-a-niche product, while for NGOs in support of human rights and LGBT rights the production of films is not normally high on the agenda. I ended up writing to a wide variety of funding bodies and received mostly negative feedback until I rewrote and shaped the grand proposal in a way that fit exactly with the goals of the respective foundations. Emphasizing the project's workshop element proved successful with the Global Fund for Women and the Berlin-based foundation Stiftung Umverteilen. After the post-production workshop was successfully completed, Umverteilen gave us an extra grant that allowed us to proceed with the final editing of the film. In order to finance the post-production steps that we could not master ourselves (like sound design and color grading) and that thus had to be outsourced to professionals with the right editing computers, we decided to start an online crowdfunding campaign that drew on the collective support of individual backers. Ultimately, it would not have been possible for us to finance this project without dipping into our own savings and receiving in-kind support from many individuals along the way.

[52] Together, In-Docs and the Jakarta International Film Festival (Jiffest) form the Society for Indonesian Film Foundation (Yayasan Masyarakat Mandiri Film Indonesia), which receives the bulk of its funding from the Ford Foundation.

Production

Workshop One: From Personal Story Sharing to Documentary Storytelling

The first workshop took place in Jakarta from 5 July to 6 August 2010. The five weeks were divided into four modules that focused on the different aspects of the filmmaking process: creative documentary storytelling (Module 1); technical training (Module 2); film shooting (Module 3); and post-production (Module 4). For the first two weeks, our group met from Monday to Friday in the Goethe Institute. Module 1 and 2 consisted of three one-and-a-half-hour-long sessions per day with a break for lunch and another for afternoon tea.[53]

Creative Documentary Storytelling (Module 1)

In the first week we focused on creative documentary storytelling, including the demonstration of different dramaturgy techniques to draft an effective story outline. The aim of this first module was to develop the ideas and eventually the script for the participants' individual films. Here the women learned how to translate personal experiences into the medium of film.

First, we held a story-sharing circle, where the women talked about their life experiences and pitched some preliminary ideas for their autoethnographies. The story sharing was not limited to the Indonesian participants; my filmmaker-colleague Angelika Levi and I also discussed our experiences as lesbian-identified and political queer-feminist German women. This group outing helped to break the ice immediately, and based on our shared affinities (Haraway 1991) we were able to create a more sympathetic atmosphere of sisterhood and reciprocity.

Given the sensitive nature of the topics under discussion, the story-sharing method was meant to create a safe space where knowledge, information, and feelings could be freely expressed and exchanged, making everybody feel comfortable. The collective sharing of and reflection upon important moments in each other's lives might itself have already been transformative, even therapeutic, on a personal level, since some of the women had never talked about their experiences, and rarely about their pain. How important this

[53] At this point it should be mentioned that the main language of the workshop was English, because Angelika Levi did not speak any Indonesian and my language proficiency is very basic. Most of the participants had enough English knowledge to follow the program without problems. Some, however, complained that we did not provide an interpreter. Two participants who were fluent, or almost fluent, in English filled this role.

process really was is expressed in the following reflection on the project by one of the eight directors:

> I am thankful to the Children of Srikandi project, because it gave me a chance to share my feelings and show a little bit of my life, that maybe I'm not alone as an in-between person.

During the first few days of the workshop we were able to establish an atmosphere of mutual trust, promoting a culture of teamwork that proved invaluable in pursuing our collective cinematic goals.

The subsequent sessions of the first workshop module were structured around screening and discussing various documentaries and short films that dealt with the topics of sexual orientation and gender identity. The choice of films was determined by the different genres and methods used by the directors of the example films to put their message across. The films were furthermore grouped around specific topics that we thought relevant for our project: stereotypes, gender and sexuality, religion, ideology, class, and memory. After the screenings we would discuss the films in focus groups.[54] Although the films were all non-Indonesian productions, the participants related the issues addressed therein to their own experiences and situated them within the Indonesian context.

Watching and discussing the films was inspiring for everybody. It helped the participants to reflect upon their own experiences and eventually pin down the ideas for their individual films. One important discussion revolved around media representations of same-sex love in Indonesia and the common stereotypes that women-who-love-women face in everyday life. The following list of stereotypes was compiled by the participants: being a lesbian is a choice or the result of a traumatic experience, usually involving men; lesbians have short hair and behave manly; lesbians are addicted to sex and perform "free sex" (*sex bebas*); lesbians are abnormal; lesbians are sinners. One participant explained how her mother believed that lesbians were deviant and dirty, "because they are obscenely obsessed with vaginas." Another participant noted the stereotype that "lesbianism" is contagious like a virus, whereupon one woman replied, "That's why I am afraid of being friends with heterosexual people." Everybody burst out laughing, and jovial conversation

[54] I am using the term "focus group" here to refer to "organized discussions with a selected group of individuals to gain information about their views and experience of a topic" (Gibbs 1997, 1). Focus groups differ from group interviews in so far as the "use of interaction as part of the research data" is of foremost importance (Kitzinger 1994, 103). In a similar way to the story-sharing circles, focus groups are a helpful way of encouraging participants "not only [to] help each other to overcome embarrassment but [also to] provide mutual support in expressing feelings which are common to their group but which they might consider deviant from mainstream culture (ibid., 111). Another benefit of focus groups is their potential to empower participants through their underlying collaborative approach to knowledge production (see Gibbs 1997).

about the difficulty of dating women in Indonesia unfolded. The conversation about stereotypes and negative media portrayals was relevant to the workshop process insofar as one reason given by most women for taking part in the project was to address and counteract these stereotypical depictions through the personal stories told in *Anak-Anak Srikandi*.

By the end of the first week, all of the directors had the final draft of their stories and we were ready to look at the technical implementation process.

Technical Training (Module 2)

In the first half of the second workshop week we focused on hands-on training sessions, in which the women were taught how to operate the video and sound equipment. The theoretical introductions to cinematography by Faozan Rizal were followed by different practical exercises in the parking lot of the Goethe Institute. Since we favored a "learning by doing" approach, the technical introductions were rather short and the real learning took place during the actual production of the short films, when everybody was invited to operate the sound boom and to experiment with the video camera. In order to understand all technical aspects of the film production process, Chandra Tanzil also gave a brief overview of the post-production stages and a presentation on how to prepare the materials for editing.

During the rest of the week we prepared for the actual production of the individual films, breaking down the different stories into shot lists and working out a shooting schedule. After getting acquainted with the technology, the filmmaker-participants would not only work as crewmembers on each other's films but also act as different characters in the individual episodes.

Figure 3: Angelika Levi and Laura Coppens discuss the script with director Winnie Wibowo

Film Shooting (Module 3)

The films took between one and three days to shoot, depending on their genre and style. For two of the short films, namely *Jlamprong by* Eggie Dian and *Acceptance* by Oji, we had to travel to Yogyakarta, a train trip of between eight and twelve hours from Jakarta.

Figure 4: Shooting in Yoygyakarta

Apart from shooting the autoethnographic short films, we also had to think about how to incorporate the tale of Srikandi into the overall structure of the film. In order to learn more about the Srikandi story and decide on the version that we wanted to have performed for

our film, we invited the *dalang* Soleh to visit our workshop and explain the different versions to us. Given the complexity of *wayang kulit* plays, we delegated the organization of the performance for our film to Lely Cabe, an employee of the Goethe Institute in Jakarta, who agreed to join our team as a production and location manager. Her experience in event management turned out to be of utmost importance. Lely not only served as personal assistant to Suci and the singer (*sinden*) Anik, doing everything from buying their plane tickets to negotiating the fees for their performance, but was also responsible for finding a Jakarta-based *gamelan* orchestra in possession of the necessary stage elements, namely a white cotton screen (*kelir*), the trunk of a banana tree, and an oil lamp (*blencong*) to serve as the light source.

Although we managed to shoot the *wayang kulit* and most of the individual films, it was impossible to complete all of them, let alone to start with the editing, as had been planned (Module 4). Therefore, we decided to organize a second workshop for the following summer, during which missing footage could be filmed and the individual shorts edited.

Postproduction

Workshop Two: Editing

Prior to our editing workshop, which took place from 1 June to 24 June 2011, all of the directors had been given a DVD with the first edit of their individual shorts. This way, they were able to look at their films before the start of our second workshop and check whether their message came across as they had hoped. Some even took the opportunity to discuss their film's structure in advance via email with editor Angelika Levi. It was of great importance to Angelika and me that the women had the final say with regard to which images and scenes should be included or excluded from their autoethnographies.

Besides additional shooting, the follow-up workshop was used primarily for collective editing and working on the overall structure of *Anak-Anak Srikandi*. For this purpose we rented a house located in a quiet outer suburb of Yogyakarta. In the four weeks of our postproduction workshop we managed to make second edits of all of the shorts, which we then assembled based on the group's input and collective brainstorming to create the first full version of *Anak-Anak Srikandi*.

Figure 5: DIY editing suite in our rented house in Yogyakarta

Due to constraints on time and finances, we decided to do the final edit in Berlin. Although we were physically distant from the participants, we found ways to work closely together throughout what remained of the postproduction. We were fortunate that two of the directors were able to join us and work as editing assistants during the final editing phase. When traveling back to Indonesia, they always had a stock of DVDs of the latest version of the film in their luggage, ready for distribution to the rest of the group. In addition, we arranged regular reviews of edited versions using compressed video files uploaded to the Internet, which were then discussed by email, over Skype, or in our Facebook chat room. Thus, our collaborative endeavor did not end with the workshop; rather, the joint decision making continued until the final cut. Our film had to be approved by all members of our collective so that everybody felt equally responsible for the final product.

The collaborative process I have described thus far may sound very easy and harmonious, but as is often the case, the reality was quite different. Despite our best intentions, many unforeseen problems arose. In the next section, I will map the different sites of contestation, addressing issues such as authorship, ownership, harm, and risk.

Dilemmas in Cross-Cultural Filmmaking[55]

Professional associations issue ethical guidelines and codes of practice that provide frameworks and principles for ethically sound research and conduct, but often fail to address issues specific to visual practices (Papademas 2004; Wiles et al. 2008, 2011). What is more, there are very few audiovisual anthropologists and documentary filmmakers who openly talk and write about the dilemmas they face during the production process and the ethical decisions they make on the ground.[56] I therefore argue that the discussion of ethics in visual research needs to be expanded, and more illustrative examples should be shared within the different communities of practice.

As was mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, feminist researchers are at the forefront of discussions about ethical issues in research practices (e.g. Card 1991; Haraway 1991; Wolf 1996; Koehn 1998; Sevenhuijsen 1998; Porter 1999; Held 2007; Hammersley & Traianou 2012). With its particular attention to power relations, the feminist approach to ethics is based on a model of care and responsibility, as summarized by Selma Sevenhuijsen (1998, 107):

> First of all, the ethics of care involves different moral concepts: responsibilities and relationships rather than rules and rights. Secondly, it is bound to concrete situations rather than being formal and abstract. And thirdly, the ethics of care can be described as a moral activity, the "activity of caring," rather than as a set of principles which can simply be followed. The central question in the ethics of care, how to deal with dependency and responsibility, differs radically from that of rights ethics: what are the highest normative principles and rights in situations of moral conflict?

My own visual research and filmmaking practice is situated within the framework of an ethics of care. This means not only different responsibilities for the women of our film collective, but also the negotiation of certain expectation of friendship in a way that neither fails the women nor endangers the project. Attentiveness is crucial here, but in the field of sexuality, in particular, it can become very messy, involving jealousy and envy, as Lewin and Leap (1996) have also shown. Ethics of care don't adhere to universal standards. Similarly, I do not believe in a blueprint of universal ethical film practices and institutionalized normative morals, but only in situated visual ethics that differ from project to project and thus need to be contextualized (Pink 2001, 2006; Edwards & Mauthner 2002; Wiles et al. 2008, 2011). Accordingly, the situations I describe in the following section need to be understood in the specific context of our production.

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[55] Parts of this section were published in Coppens (2013b).

[56] For an exception to this rule, see Aibel's (1988) vivid account of ethics in filmmaking practice.

Whose Story Is It?[57] **Negotiating Authorship**

Authorship in documentary filmmaking is a highly contentious issue. It so happened that I found myself utterly confused about my actual role in *Anak-Anak Srikandi.* The group of participants did not question my role as a producer. Unease among some members arose, however, when I also claimed authorial credit for our movie. Part of this disquiet was predicated on the lack of a clear definition of writing in the sphere of non-fiction film. It was further complicated by the fact that the final movie was conceptualized as an anthology of eight interwoven stories with scenes from a shadow puppet theater play, providing the overall story arc. In the eyes of some group members, the only people entitled to writing credits were the directors of the individual authored episodes. While I understood this, I argued that I *wrote* the entire concept for the film project and should therefore also get a writer's credit.

In making my point, I drew on an expanded definition of the term "writing," which (in the film world) is usually restricted to the authoring of fiction scripts. New York Times journalist Tom Roston (2012) recently discussed the issue of "documentary writing" in an article. In his view, the Writers Guild of America (WGA) triggered the discussion about writing credits. From the perspective of the WGA, writing is not confined to the narration or text that one hears and reads in documentaries, but also includes off-screen activities like writing a concept and treatment and organizing the material for editing. The WGA East Executive Director Lowell Peterson is quoted as follows: "Writing story outlines, the way you frame a question, the arc you seek to traverse through your questions? That's writing … Writing stuff to structure stories is writing. And yes, I think people should get a writing credit for that." Not surprisingly, this view is a source of contention among members of the non-fiction community, especially film editors and directors, as they fear the blurring of professional boundaries and ultimately the loss of their jobs (Roston 2012).

The debate over writing in the film world resembles a paradox found in the realm of academia, where there is an evident fetishization of authorship. Indeed, publishing monographs and peer-reviewed journal articles is the very essence of scholarship and the visible recognition we build our careers on. Not being credited as an author calls into question our eligibility as members of the academic tribe. This partly explains the continuous questioning of my academic colleagues about the exact nature of my role within the *Anak-Anak Srikandi* project. It was not least because of the underlying institutional

[57] The title "Whose Story Is It?" is borrowed from David MacDougall (1991).

pressure I felt throughout my research and film production that I sought to claim a writer's credit alongside the Indonesian writer-directors at the beginning of the project.

The significance of the writer's credit was further apparent in the process of negotiating credits with the third party in our production triangle of "directors–visual anthropologist–film industry professional." Just as the women and I were claiming authorship, Angelika Levi, as one of the workshop's tutors and the editor of *Anak-Anak Srikandi*, also wanted to be acknowledged for her authorial contributions. Her line of argumentation is in accordance with that of many filmmakers cited in Roston's (2012) article, who share the view that editing is writing in its most rigorous sense. After all, the final narrative structure and dramaturgy is decided upon in the editing room.

In the process of negotiating and defining what authorship actually means in a collaborative film like *Anak-Anak Srikandi,* we came to the conclusion that all of us had contributed in different but equally important ways to the final movie. The Indonesian participants wrote and directed their individual short films, but there is no doubt about the creative and conceptual input that Angelika Levi and I had in the creation of *Anak-Anak Srikandi*. We both served as co-authors/directors alongside the group members and helped operate the audiovisual equipment. Furthermore, I developed the concept and narrative strategy of the anthology, which my colleague then assembled in her particular style of montage. Nevertheless, the content and overall structure of the movie was determined through a process of collective decision-making. Clearly, we had all co-authored *Anak-Anak Srikandi*, and the only way we could properly acknowledge each woman's contributorship and give credit to our collective endeavor was by creating the label "Children of Srikandi Collective," which we henceforth used as the director's and writer's credit. The notion of a collective seemed to describe most accurately the complex working relationships embodied in the final product. Nevertheless, we were careful to acknowledge all individual contributions in the end credits of the movie. The idea of collective authorship within an experimental production space mirrors the DIY ethos of the new generation of Indonesian filmmakers. *Kolaborasi* (collaboration), a very common concept in contemporary Indonesian arts practices, challenges the hierarchical production model and the cult of the individual artist as known from "New Order arts paternalism" (Paramaditha 2012).

The concept of collective and shared authorship also challenges ethnographic authority (see Clifford 1983; Ruby 1995, 2000) and manifests itself in a learning environment, that is, according to Sarah Elder (1995, 94),

> a space for filmmakers to learn to pose the questions they do not originally know to ask, a place where film subjects select the fragments of their reality they deem significant to document, and a moral place where subjects and image makers can mediate their own representations.

Elder's collaborative method of "shared space" aims at the equal distribution of power. In the course of the *Anak-Anak Srikandi* project, the boundaries between teacher and students became permeable; everybody was involved in a learning process and shared their knowledge and skills. This kind of reciprocal exchange can have a transformative potential at the individual level and can be an effective means to deal with "the moral burden of authorship" (Ruby 1995) continuously faced by many anthropologists and other media producers.

The assemblage of diverse perspectives occurring within cross-cultural filmmaking practices resembles David MacDougall's notion of an "intertextual cinema" that is based on a "principle of multiple authorship" (MacDougall [1973] 1998, 138). These intertextual and indeed intersubjective encounters are reflected in our final product, and, as MacDougall (1991, 6) argues elsewhere, "if a film is a reflection of an encounter between filmmaker and subject, it must be seen to some degree as produced by the subject." Although in our case the subjects are the filmmakers themselves, this rule holds true for all cross-cultural encounters and serves to highlight once again how making films is a practice embedded in social processes that cannot be ignored when talking about the final product. This brings me to the next ethical issue, namely the importance of reciprocity and the dilemma of payment (see Asch 1992; Barbash & Taylor 1997, 62-69; Pink 2001, 2007).

Ethics of Payment: The Thin Line Between Collaboration and Exploitation

Similar to the politics of credits and authorship, issues of payment are not widely discussed in literature on audiovisual anthropology and documentary filmmaking (Tomaselli 1996, 115; de Laat 2004, 142f). Unquestionable, I have much to gain from the production of *Anak-Anak Srikandi* and my subsequent writings about it, including being awarded a PhD and enhancing my portfolio as a filmmaker. With this in mind, the entire project was designed as a collaborative venture, as I was convinced that this would result in a less

exploitative relationship with the participant-filmmakers. I hoped that in the end they would also have a film they could use to their advantage.

Sarah Pink (2001, 40) points to the irony of the practice of "giving something back" (be it written data, photographs, or films) that is advocated by many anthropologists today. She concludes that this common practice is only beneficial for the researcher (if anyone), making her or him "feel ethically virtuous." As an alternative, Pink (2001, 45) suggests employing a less exploitative approach from the very beginning, whereby both anthropologists and participant-subjects share agency and "create something together."

In the course of the production of *Anak-Anak Srikandi*, however, it became very clear to me that this was a best-case scenario. Given the different backgrounds of the women and the very diverse expectations they had for the project, it seemed inevitable that not everyone would be totally satisfied with the end result. Whereas some women achieved their goals and were even able to use the movie for their personal development after its completion, others felt less rewarded.

Sometimes, simply participating in and completing a film project is seen by the participants as reward enough (see Barbash & Taylor 1997; de Laat 2004; Pink 2001, 2007). This resonates with Sarah Elder's experience during her own collaborative film projects undertaken with Leonard Kamerling and Inupiaq and Yup'ik communities in Alaska, the outcome of which she describes as follows: "Each collaborator has been able to satisfy enough of their own goals in the design of the films to make them valuable for their own needs" (Elder 1995, 98). My experience producing *Anak-Anak Srikandi* was more ambivalent, demonstrating that different people may understand collaboration differently and that the line between collaboration and exploitation is a rather thin one. When does an individual's collaborative duty toward a collective goal end? And where do we draw the line between uncompensated collaborative work and paid professional work?

In order to answer these questions, it is helpful to recount a particularly telling incident. One cold day in early February 2011, I was walking to the subway station in Berlin with one of the anthology's directors, who was in town for personal reasons and therefore offered to help us with the editing process. At that time we were almost one month into the editing work. Everything was going smoothly, and Angelika Levi and I were happy that at least one of the Indonesian group members was able to share the editing experience with us, which felt right given the kind of collaboration we envisioned. Halfway to the station, I was sensing unease from the director who was walking to my right. And there it was, the

question about payment for her translation and transcription work during the editing. What followed was a long negotiation that suddenly put the entire project at stake. What was I to do in this situation? On what basis should I make a critical decision?

The question of payment for the transcription and translation work done by the visiting Indonesian director left me feeling confused and disheartened. Immediately, I sensed there had been a big misunderstanding on both sides. Whereas I considered the director's work as part of our collaborative film project, and as an extension of our earlier workshop in Jakarta, she saw her role as that of a professional editing assistant and thus expected to be paid for her time. Until this crucial February evening, however, neither of us had discussed this issue openly. When the payment question was finally raised there was no room for discussion, but it led directly to lengthy negotiations over the fee for her work. In a later email, she admitted that she should have discussed the conditions regarding the amount and timing of any payments with me before starting the actual work. Instead, she assumed that I had already secured the money for the employment of an editing assistant.[58] The director, now acting in her position as a film professional, regarded herself not as a participant-insider but as an expert-outsider. As she made clear to me in an email, she had fulfilled her "duty" to the collective during the first workshop in Jakarta by directing her film and helping her fellow directors to shoot theirs. Regardless of our plans for a second workshop devoted to the collective editing in summer that year, she drew a strict line between the two work realms. In her view, it seemed, the collective dimension only applied to the creative filmmaking process in Indonesia and not to the editing work in Germany, where she wanted to be considered as an expert-outsider. Viewed from this perspective, her claim for payment seems reasonable, despite the fact that no contract was ever signed.

For me, however, our project was a DIY workshop film within a *shared space*, where both of us, as amateur filmmakers, occupied a learning position. *Anak-Anak Srikandi* is in no way comparable to a commercial film production, but must be situated instead in the realm of no-to-low-budget films. Like most documentaries, ours was chronically underfunded. The precarious financial situation of the project was made clear to all

[58] I had also just negotiated the working conditions with Angelika, who was employed by the project as a film professional (i.e. as both a workshop instructor and an editor). She was the only person in the collective who was paid an honorarium. The funding secured at that point was hardly enough to pay the editor's fee and the studio rent, and I had not budgeted any further expenses at that particular time, even though the employment of an assistant editor was listed in the overall film budget. However, apart from Angelika Levi, I paid all outside talent, people who were not directly involved in the film collective, from our budget (e.g. musicians, shadow puppet performer, animation artist, graphic and web designer, sound designer, color grader).

participants, as was the fact that the project's continuation depended on additional funds raised by the Indonesian executive producer and myself. Nevertheless, it seems that the financial hopes and expectations inherent in cross-cultural projects are not easily dismantled. Since I did not manage to raise sufficient funds to cover the full payment of both Angelika Levi and the visiting director, in the view of the latter, I had failed in my duty as a producer. Consequently, she felt unappreciated, betrayed, and exploited. When she threatened to leave the film project, I was forced to find the outstanding money for her payment elsewhere, because I did not want to risk the entire project falling apart. Nevertheless, our discussion about monetary compensation deeply affected the relationship between us, eventually resulting in the director's resignation ten months later and only three months before the world premiere of *Anak-Anak Srikandi* at the Berlin International Film Festival.[59]

This case demonstrates the limits of collaboration in cross-cultural filmmaking as well as the risk of exploitation, even when projects are initiated with the best intentions in mind. Foreign filmmakers should be aware of the situated understanding of the notion of collaboration and discuss this matter before and during the conception of a project in order to avoid later confusion. As one of ten steps toward better, more ethical filmmaking, Timothy Asch (1992, 202f) recommends to "make a royalty arrangement with the people filmed and see that they receive money." In a similar way to Sarah Elder and Lenny Kamerling, who shared copyright and royalties with the Inuit communities with which they worked in Alaska, Timothy and Patsy Asch gave a percentage of their films' royalties to the Balinese dancer they depicted and the village they worked in. In the case of our collective, we together drafted a contract stating the directors' ownership of their footage and the final film and stipulating the equal distribution of royalties among all members of the Children of Srikandi Collective.

Taking Risks: Dealing with Potential Harms

Making visible hitherto invisible and marginalized people often comes with a risk. In Indonesia there is a danger in exposing alternative sexualities and gender identities in the public mediascape. Thus, debate over potential risks, especially with the public release of *Anak-Anak Srikandi,* formed an essential part of our production process.

[59] Since the director signed the contract prior to her resignation, she agreed that her episode could still be included in the final movie.

Informed consent, the famously debated principle of ethically sound qualitative research, also played an important role in our collaborative project. Since the women were producing their own films, they were responsible for seeking the consent of the people who featured therein. For the most part, those appearing in the films were members of our group and consent was given orally, but in the cases where a third party was involved we made sure these people signed a consent form. All external participants were informed about the nature of the movie and subsequent distribution plans.

Aware of the moral responsibility we had to the people participating in the production of *Anak-Anak Srikandi*, including ourselves, we tried to identify as many potential risks as possible. Only when practicing what Cahill et al. (2008) have termed "informed risk" can those who produce knowledge take full responsibility for the representations they construct. Clearly, the notion of "informed risk" entails the same limitations and problems as "informed consent." There is widespread debate over the extent to which researchers and filmmakers can really inform the people with whom they work about all of the consequences they may face when appearing in a film or publication that will be widely disseminated even years after its creation. Once visual images enter the public domain, there is no way to control their future use or to prevent interpretations that significantly diverge from the readings intended by the creators (see Gross et al. 1988, 2003; Barbash & Taylor 1997; Pink 2001; Rose 2007; Wiles et al. 2008, 2011; Clark, 2012).

The foremost concern of the directors of *Anak-Anak Srikandi* was the personal harm that could arise from screening the film publicly in Indonesia. Their anxieties were inspired primarily by several threats and attacks against the Indonesian LGBT community that occurred around the time of the production. Furthermore, some of the women, particularly those who had not yet come out to their families, feared being ostracized by their close relatives and subsequent unforeseen consequences. We decided on two strategies that we hoped would reduce the potential risks as much as possible and give the women a sense of security and control. First, in the same contract that specified ownership and royalty agreements, we included one paragraph that defined the right of the directors to determine if, how, when, and where the movie could be screened in Indonesia. Second, during the compilation of the individual episodes, we resolved to put neither a title nor the director's name before or after each film, but decided instead to list both in the end credits. In this way, viewers would not be able to identify the director of a given film right away. Indeed, it requires some effort and several viewings to ascertain who made which film,

since the only clue to this is the film's place in the overall movie. In addition, one of the directors decided to paint her face to mask her identity.

Despite these security measures and our continuous dialogue about risks and harms, one director withdrew her contribution out of fears for her safety. This happened shortly after we had finished shooting *Anak-Anak Srikandi* and were halfway through the post-production phase. Since the director in question was yet to sign the contract, her short film was replaced by a sequence in which some of the directors are seen discussing the incident via Skype and reflecting on the issues of risk, fear, and violence and ultimately on the consequences that the public circulation of the film might have for their personal lives. During this sequence, one of the directors comments as follows:

> Why has one of the participants left the project? I share the same feeling of terror about being exposed that you are gay or just different. The fear not only comes from outside, but also from inside you. And I tried to deal with it all my life. I don't want it in my head anymore, in my being.

In an email discussion about the content and nature of the critical Skype section, the same director stated the following: "Personally, I am tired of being silenced and start asking myself what I can actually do to contribute to my life-free-of-fear that gives chance to maybe happiness?" The self-reflexive layer turned out to be an important element within the film's narrative and further situates *Anak-Anak Srikandi* within a political and activist trajectory. The Skype sequence, in its amateurish appearance, explicitly calls attention to risk-taking. It provides extra-textual context, frames the directors as courageous women, and thus makes the viewers understand the risks that the Indonesian LGBT community face on a daily basis (see also Hjort 2012; Naficy 2012).

In the process of the film's creation, we carefully held up the potential harms and benefits next to each other. Speaking of the role of danger in the production of films by minority people, Hamid Naficy (2012, 126) notes,

> Taking risks in order to become visible, to come into representation, is life affirming. It gives meaning to the life of individual filmmakers and the communities they represent. However, the more visible they become, the more they risk, opening themselves up to the disciplinary, regulatory, and surveilling regimes of control.

Although all of the participants involved in *Anak-Anak Srikandi* felt a certain degree of angst about what they were doing, they came to understand that critical interventions toward change are rarely possible without risk-taking, and that by taking risks they could "lay claim to expertise in their own lived experiences" (Gubrium & Hill, in press).

Ultimately, the personal benefits of visibility outweighed the risks for all but one of the Indonesian filmmakers.

Some Final Notes on Collaboration

In this chapter I have demonstrated that collaborative approaches to filmmaking do not automatically guarantee the destabilization of power relations and a subsequent "decolonizing of methodologies" (Tuhiwai Smith 1999). Although appealing in theory, proper collaboration is very hard to achieve in practice. Some scholars therefore question whether collaboration might be a mere fantasy after all (Barbash & Taylor 1997, 88f). There is indeed a danger that in the end it is still the filmmaker-anthropologist who pulls the strings, thereby perpetuating the very power imbalances she or he seeks to level. This paradoxical nature of collaboration was readily apparent during the *Anak-Anak Srikandi* project. Although we successfully negotiated our shared authorship and the participants' sense of ownership grew over the course of the film production process, the producers (Anglika Levi as co-producer, Stea Lim as our Indonesian executive producer, and I as the main producer) were the driving force behind the project. After all, we were overseeing the entire production process and controlling the final product (not least for the sake of remaining credible toward sponsors and financial supporters), and we might therefore be seen as "benevolent dictators" (Raymond 2000).

Given the different positionalities of those working on *Anak-Anak Srikandi*, unequal power relationships could not be avoided. Class was certainly the biggest marker of difference within our project, not only for Angelika and me as foreign filmmakers but also among the Indonesian participants. Although the group was aware of the divisive nature of this phenomenon, we could not prevent the development of hierarchies and subsequently feelings of marginalization and exploitation among some group members.

Power cannot be escaped; instead, we have to learn how best to deal with it. As Kesby (2005, 2084) puts it,

> If there is no escape from power, then surely we have no choice but to draw on less dominating frameworks in order to destabilize and transform more dominating forms of power. Thus participation's proven failure to escape from power and its association with governance do not inherently prevent it from being one of many helpful discourses on which to draw in the pursuit of a radical, transformative political praxis.

Yet power is not only wielded by the researcher-filmmaker, as my example of the participant-turned-employee demonstrated. If in our research and filmmaking practices we

want to recognize the participants as equal knowledge producers, then we also have to accept that they have control over the project and are able to determine its success or failure. In retrospect, I am convinced that the key to a successful collaboration is mastering the art of clear communication, which involves listening to people as much as speaking. Only then can misunderstandings be avoided. Ethnographic film veteran Timothy Asch (cited in Ruby 2000, 123) makes another valuable suggestion in this regard: "You have to take your ego and just put it in the wastebasket because it is not going to serve you very well in a collaboration."

Thus, if collaboration is to be taken seriously as an ethical concept, addressing issues of authority and authorship, risk and harm, and reciprocity and copyright, as well as engaging in critical evaluation throughout the production, post-production, and distribution process, must be at the heart of every (anthropologically inspired) film project. Ultimately, "ethics is about *how* to deal with conflict, disagreement and ambivalence rather than attempting to eliminate it" (Edwards & Mauthner 2002, 22; emphasis in original). Critical (self-)reflection and the sharing of ethics-in-practice offer one the chance to open up a greater dialogue about anthropological image-making and provoke discussions that hopefully lead us to make more ethically sound films based on mutual respect.

To sum up, this chapter has demonstrated how the creative process of doing collaborative filmmaking opened up a space for transformation by repositioning the women as co-producers of knowledge, allowing for individual empowerment. Having elaborated on collaborative filmmaking and the making of *Anak-Anak Srikandi,* the next chapter focuses more closely on how the anthology's directors engage in film activism through their individual autoethnographies.

CHAPTER 4

PERFORMING DISIDENTIFICATION: THE SUBVERSIVE POTENTIAL OF QUEER AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

In this chapter I will explore the transformative possibilities of queer autoethnography. In their numerous creative writing experiments, performance studies scholar Stacy Holman Jones and communication theorist Tony E. Adams (see Holman Jones & Adams 2010; Adams & Holman Jones 2011) outline the different cooperative ideological commitments shared by autoethnography and queer theory. In this chapter, I focus on one such commitment, namely making discursive trouble. In order to illustrate "what can happen when a method and a theoretical perspective are put into conservation, when we hinge experience and analysis, ambiguity and clarity, dialogue and debate, accessibility and academic activism, 'just stories' and high theory," as Holman Jones and Adams (2010, 139) put it, I will consider two of the short films in the anthology, *Deconstruction* by Stea Lim and *Hello World!* by Imelda Taurinamandala.

I have chosen these two films for closer analysis on the grounds that, unlike the other stories in *Anak-Anak Srikandi*, which employ symbolic and subconscious modes of subversion, *Deconstruction* and *Hello World!* self-consciously enact social critique, and are reflexive of, and strategically subvert, heteronormativity through "storying theory" (Holman Jones & Adams 2010, 143). This is not to say that the other autoethnographies are less significant or less political; on the contrary, as I argued in the introduction, they also take a political stand and create conversation, albeit in a very different way.

The two queer autoethnographies under consideration illuminate and subvert gender norms by deploying the performative strategy of drag. I argue that the performance of femininity in *Deconstruction* and the performance of masculinity in *Hello World*! are conscious disidentificatory practices that undermine the "heterosexual matrix" (Butler [1990]1999). By understanding the self-enactments of the two directors as disidentifications, I draw on the work of queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz. In his seminal book *Disidentifications: Queers of Colors and the Performance of Politics,* Muñoz (1999, 97) defines disidentification as

> a performative mode of tactical recognition that various minoritarian subjects employ in an effort to resist the oppressive and normalizing discourse of dominant ideology. Disidentification resists the interpellating call of ideology that fixes a subject within the state power apparatus. It is a reformatting of self within the social.

Discussing the different ways in which the two queer autoethnographies "resist the oppressive and normalizing discourse of dominant ideology" is the primary objective of this chapter.

I build upon Judith Butler's argument that sex and gender norms may be performatively re-inscribed or *re-cited* in ways that subvert heteronormativity ([1990]1999, 1991, 1993). Butler identifies the cultural practice of drag as an important example of subversive performativity and agency. But in *Bodies that Matter* (1993, 230), she also issues two caveats: first, drag should not be seen as *exemplary* of performativity, which would be tantamount to confusing performativity with performance; and second, drag is not a priori a site of resistance. In a similar vein, Kathryn Hobson (2013, 48) points to examples of "unreflexive drag" in her analysis of drag king performances in the United States. She demonstrates how some performers successfully subvert heterornormativity, while others, especially white middle-class performers, reify heterosexual gender norms. This chapter will demonstrate what critical and reflexive drag by queers of color can look like and how different disidentificatory effects are achieved.[60]

Other performative strategies of filmic queer autoethnographies include the incorporation of family photographs, home movies, citations from popular culture, and long takes (see Muñoz 1999; Russel 1999; Renov 2004). A further particularity of this storytelling practice, as Muñoz (1999, 86) notes, is the "not lining up" of filmic elements like sound, image, and text. In his readings of Richard Fung's videos, it is this particular strategy he identifies as "decidedly queer," as it makes strange "traditional documentary, which is chiefly concerned with sound and image marching together as a tool of authorization" (ibid.).

Lastly, I will demonstrate how the *Anak-Anak Srikandi* project produces what art historian and cultural theorist Johanna Schaffer (2008, 136, my translation) calls "affirmative visibility" (*anerkennende Sichtbarkeit*), that is, "modes of visibility and structures of a given to-be-seen-ness that affirm and attach value to subject positions and knowledge contexts."[61] In order to achieve affirmation, the film collective re-worked visual conventions and dominant modes of representation beyond the positive image politics to which many contemporary Indonesian filmmakers adhere. In this sense, *Anak-Anak*

[60] For the theorization and analysis of drag performances by queer people of color, see, for example, Muñoz (1999), Alexander (2006), and Moreman and McIntosh (2010).
[61] "Mit Produktion anerkennender Sichtbarkeit meine ich hier Formen der Sichtbarkeit und Strukturen eines Zu-Sehen-Gegeben-Seins, die Subjektpositionen und Wissenskontexte affirmiert und mit Wert belehnt."

Srikandi was also intended to destabilize essentialized identity. Film scholar Catherine Russel (1999, 276) emphasizes this subversive quality of autoethnography when she argues that "[a]utoethnography is a vehicle and a strategy for challenging imposed forms of identity and exploring the discursive possibilities of inauthentic subjectivities."

Before I delve into my reading of the two exemplary disidentificatory autoethnographies, I wish to reflect on some of the ambivalences of visibility that one must bear in mind when engaging in the audiovisual representation of marginalized communities. The visibility project of *Anak-Anak Srikandi* poses a number of important questions: a) What are the risks and opportunities of coming out in the Indonesian context?; b) How is the act of coming out in Indonesia different to that in the West; and finally c) How can one constructively engage with the ambivalences of visibility?

On Coming Out and the Ambivalences of Visibility

One aim of the *Anak-Anak Srikandi* project was to make the invisible visible, because women's same-sex sexuality is largely silenced in Indonesia. In this sense, the anthology may be seen as a coming-out film. However, looking at it from the level of genre, the individual autoethnographies do not constitute classical coming-out narratives in that they do not involve a proclamation of lesbian identity as understood in the West. What we see on screen, instead, are rather personal reflections on the women's current life worlds and past experiences in the context of contemporary heteronormative Indonesian society. Or to put it another way, in the film the directors perform their subject position as women-who-love-women, but they do not publicly declare a supposedly authentic lesbian identity.

Although *Anak-Anak Srikandi* circulated, and still circulates, worldwide, the film mainly addresses Indonesian communities of women-who-love-women, as one of the directors clarifies in the film's press kit:

> Women, especially LBT women, are underrepresented in media; their issues and conflicts are swept under the rug. Our goal is to reach out to many LBT women in Indonesia who are afraid to come forward or feel that they are alone. If we can reach just one heart at a time, then we already succeeded.

Interestingly, she does not adopt the Western phrase "coming out" but instead uses the term "come forward," which can be read as a more subtle call to present oneself or to confess, for that matter, to the "lesbian world" (*dunia lesbi*) as against society at large. This hints at a quite different approach to the politics of visibility and the confessional discourse

of coming out in the Indonesian context, one that is rather partial and might be best described as "coming out within the closet," to use an expression coined by Intan Paramaditha (2011b, 508f).

Cultural anthropologist Tom Boellstorff (2005, 170-175; 2007) argues that the notion of "coming out" marks one of the biggest differences between Western and Indonesian gay and lesbian subject positions. In the West, coming out refers to a process that starts with self-awareness, continues with self-acceptance, and finally leads to disclosure of one's sexual orientation to friends, family, and colleagues. For most gays and lesbians in Indonesia, meanwhile, coming out is only possible in confined safe spaces. In fact, there is no Indonesian-language equivalent to "coming out of the closet."

The metaphor that is commonly used instead is "opening oneself to the gay/lesbian world," that is, to a like-minded community (Boellstorff 2005, 170-175; 2007a, 199). Hence, whereas the Western concept of coming out refers to a confessional discourse that includes society at large, the Indonesian concept of "opening oneself" (*membuka diri*) operates on a much smaller scale. Indeed, Indonesians with alternative sexual subject positions must carefully negotiate various spaces, usually disclosing their subjectivity and same-sex desire only to a close group of friends within the gay or lesbian world itself and almost never to family and coworkers (see also Blackwood 2010, 151-77).[62] Therefore, as Boellstorff (2005, 174) argues,

> One finds not an epistemology of the closet,[63] but an epistemology of life worlds, where healthy subjectivity depends not on integrating diverse domains of life and having a unified, unchanging identity in all situations, but on separating domains of life and maintaining their borders against the threat of gossip and discovery.

Another common aspect of Indonesian coming-out strategies is the integration of one's alternative sexuality within the family unit. In her discussion of the coming-out narrative in the popular gay film *Arisan*! (2003), Maimunah (2011, 123) shows how this is successfully achieved through the "silent acceptance strategy," an Indonesian version of the "don't ask don't tell" principle. In the film, one of the protagonists, Sakti, never directly comes out to his mother. Apparently there is no need for this, since his mother has already found out, albeit accidently, about her son's sexual orientation. Instead of openly addressing the topic, she just keeps quiet and silently accepts it.

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[62] The family is the greatest obstacle for most gays and lesbians in Indonesia (Oetomo 2001a, 220). This also holds true for a number of other Asian countries, including China (see Bao 2010; Kam 2013).
[63] For the concept of "epistemology of the closet," see Sedgwick (1990).

Maimunah (ibid., 125) terms this non-confrontational process "coming out as coming home," which implies that

> the family is no more an oppressive institution but a central space in which the queer characters receive the greatest room for personal growth and support. In this way, *Arisan!* works to integrate a key feature of gay identity formation in the West with local cultural norms and values.

The non-confrontational way of dealing with homosexuality within the close family unit is not simply a fictional trope. During fieldwork, many of my interlocutors told me that they assumed their parents knew about their sexual orientation, but that both parties carefully avoided talking about it. Thus, the localized concept of "coming out as coming home" represents an effective means to avoid conflicts by appealing to so-called Asian family values. Whereas in the West coming out often involves leaving the blood family to realize one's full subjecthood, in most Asian countries "family is almost ubiquitous and inescapable" (Berry 2001, 220).

Saskia Wieringa (2007, 87) also discusses the "traditional culture of public silence about sexuality" in her work on a working-class butch/femme community in Jakarta. Here she demonstrates how the discourse of silence provides female couples from the low-income stratum a relatively safe social space in which to live out their alternative subject positions and same-sex sexual practices. Silence and secrecy, as opposed to openness, on the part of the cohabitating female couples is thus key to a peaceful life, because they adhere to the local concept of social harmony (*rukun*). As Wieringa (ibid., 83) further explicates, "What is important is that the surface is not disturbed by knowledge of facts that might rupture the tenuous and unstable religious or social consensus." Thus, as long as the nature of a same-sex couple's relationship is not made public, they will not face discrimination (see also Blackwood 2010, 166f).

With Indonesia's democratic opening, the discourse of silence has been increasingly challenged by the new rights discourses (Wieringa 2007, 71) and by "global queer knowledge" (Blackwood 2010, 179-209) that have since started to circulate widely. Well-educated, middle-class Indonesian gay and lesbian activists and women's rights advocates are at the forefront of promoting equality and individual (sexual) rights. An important aspect of this discourse is the Western notion of "visibility," which sees the public assertion of one's sexual identity as prerequisite to full subjecthood and progressive LGBT rights politics (Boellstorff 2005, 227).

For instance, Indonesian activist Dédé Oetomo (2001a, 215) clearly endorses this Western discourse and its "logic of self-liberation" when suggesting that staying in the closet causes psychological pressure and emotional stress.

For many Indonesian gays and lesbians, however, especially those from a working-class background, the discourse of visibility is not only irrelevant but also potentially dangerous, entailing severe social and economic repercussions such as exclusion from their families and sometimes even physical violence (see Boellstorff 2005, 227; Wieringa 2007, 71). Most of my interlocutors (including the *Anak-Anak Srikandi* directors), particularly those who did not have a job or earned very little money, stated that the disclosure of their sexuality to their family was out of the question, because they were financially dependent upon them and thus would not want, under any circumstances, to threaten their familial ties.

The situation looks slightly different for women-who-love-women with sufficient income, however. These women seem to be somewhat more likely to come out, although *rukun* and filial piety are still considered more important than the public proclamation of one's personal sexual preferences. In her book *Shanghai Lalas: Female Tongzhi Communities and Politics in Urban China* (2013), gender studies scholar Lucetta Yip Lo Kam arrives at similar conclusions concerning women-who-love-women in Shanghai, most of whom only have the courage to come out if they have a stable career and are economically successful. Kam (2013, 69) terms this compensation tactic the "politics of public correctness," which she explains as follows: "It represents a logic in which one tries to outperform in other aspects of life to achieve the familial and social recognition needed to compensate for her sexual abnormality, so that in the end, her sexuality is accepted and traded off with other public goods." A similar logic is at work in Indonesia, where non-normative women and men believe that performance of "good deeds" (*prestasi*) as well as personal and professional achievements lead to their acceptance (*penerimaan*) and inclusion in society (*masyarakat*) (Boellstorff 2005, 39f, 173, 212f).

In Indonesia, like in most other patriarchal and heteronormative societies, coming out is not only a class-privileged process but also a deeply gendered one. Accordingly, most of the outted people I met during my research were well-educated, affluent, modern gay men. Not surprisingly, this is also the group that is most commonly depicted in Indonesian films dealing with alternative sexualities, such as the aforementioned *Arisan*! (2003). Both Indonesianist Ben Murtagh (2013) and film scholar Chris Berry (2005) argue that

mainstream representations of gay people on screen do not properly reflect the variety of lived experiences and alternative gendered and sexed subject positions to be found across Indonesia (see Blackwood 2005b; Boellstorff 2005; Davies 2010; Wieringa 2010a). As Berry (2005, 306) asserts, "There was no poverty in the Indonesia of *Arisan!*, no local *waria* transgender cultures, no working-class same-sex culture, and no Islam, either."

It has been argued that one problem with most positive image and anti-homophobic films is their reliance on stereotypes (see Schaffer 2008; Murtagh 2013). *Arisan!* is a good example of "the possibility … that even affirmative images of others could be consistent with, or serve as vehicles of, injustice" (Markell 2003, 5). The prioritization of (upper-)middle-class gay men in Indonesian cinema can therefore be seen as what Benedicto (2013, 117) calls a "privileged form of gay world-making" that leads to new forms of exclusion. If only affluent metropolitan gay men who can afford to be "out and proud" are given the privilege of visibility in the media, then Indonesian gays—let alone women-who-love-women—who divert from this homonorm are rendered invisible. The foregrounding of stereotypical identities on screen not only elides the diversity of alternative sexualities and genders in Indonesia, but also reifies the hegemonic Western discourse of visibility that often denounces non-Western LGBT people who do not come out as backward (see Wünsch 2005, 36).

With regard to the symbolic violence of the discourse of coming out, Judith Butler (1991, 15) once famously asked, "Is the subject who is 'out' free of its subjection and finally in the clear? Or could it be that the subjection that subjectivates the gay or lesbian subject in some ways continues to oppress, or oppresses most insidiously, once 'outness' is claimed?" Her insightful answer is worth quoting at length (ibid., 15f):

> If I claim to be a lesbian, I "come out" only to produce a new and different "closet." Conventionally, one comes out *of* the closet (and yet, how often is it the case that we are "outted" when we are young and without resources?); so we are out of the closet, but into what? what new unbounded spatiality? the room, the den, the attic, the basement, the house, the bar, the university, some new enclosure whose door, like Kafka's door, produces the expectation of a fresh air and a light of illumination that never arrives? Curiously, it is the figure of the closet that produces this expectation, and which guarantees its dissatisfaction. For being "out" always depends to some extent on being "in"; it gains its meaning only with that polarity. Hence, being "out" must produce the closet again and again in order to maintain itself as "out." In this sense, *outness* can only produce a new opacity; and *the closet* produces the promise of a disclosure that can, by definition, never come.

Here Butler not only points to the theoretical impossibility of coming out, but also cautions that the "instrumental uses of 'identity' do not become regulatory imperatives" (ibid., 16).

She criticizes the in/out metaphor inasmuch as it creates a binary opposition, which, on the one hand, portrays "the closet" as a dark and pitiful place and, on the other hand, glorifies the act of coming out as arriving into a "light of illumination," understood here as an affirmative aura of pride.

From the previous discussion, it can be seen that coming out as gay or lesbian does not afford full revelation and that liberation, recognition, and empowerment do not rest univocally with visibility. In her book *Ambivalenzen der Sichtbarkeit: Über die Visuellen Strukturen der Anerkennung* (2008), Johanna Schaffer discusses at length the limitations and ambivalences of visibility politics. She criticizes the implicit positive connotation that the term "visibility" and the appraisal of the political process of "making visible" have had in "minoritarian" identity politics. She goes on to demonstrate how many activists often confuse (more) visibility with (more) political power.

Invisibility is generally seen as a negative state of minoritized subject positions. This view is not necessarily accurate, as we have learned from Saskia Wieringa's research about a working-class butch/femme community in Jakarta. Invisibility can be as powerful as visibility. Feminist and performance studies scholar Peggy Phelan (1993, 6) formulates this as follows: "the binary between the power of visibility and the impotency of invisibility is falsifying. There is real power in remaining unmarked; and there are serious limitations to visual representation as a political goal." Referencing Lacan, she continues, "Visibility is a trap; it summons surveillance and the law; it provokes voyeurism, fetishism, the colonialist/imperial appetite for possession." When further put into relationship with Foucault's (1977) surveillance model, the disempowering effects of visibility become even more apparent.

In fact, more visibility means greater susceptibility to the workings of disciplinary power but also a stronger integration of non-normative subject positions into normative identity standards. Schaffer (2008, 52) convincingly argues that many well-intentioned visibility projects by and for minority groups fall into the "increased visibility = increased power" trap, because visual productions, no matter how critical and interventionist, always involve a recourse to available and pre-formulated dominant parameters of representation. Hence, as Schaffer further contends, the praxis of making subaltern groups visible is not possible outside the representational regime that produces hegemonic knowledge, which results in the paradoxical situation of affirming their minoritization.

Given that the subversion of dominant ideologies is "restrained through the very structures of power through which emancipation is fought," the question for marginalized groups is how to "undermine the performative constructions and patterns that produce and reproduce domination" (Clark 2004, 126). To put it another way, how can marginalized subject positions be represented visually without reproducing this very minoritization in their mode of representation? Johanna Schaffer tackles this visibility dilemma by suggesting that if visibility is to make sense as a concept and weapon against invisibility and underrepresentation, then one has to engage in a reflexive and revisionist practice of representation in order to avoid the (re-)production of clichéd images and universalizing compulsions of identity. As Schaffer (2008, 58, my translation) further explains,

> Because when visibility and invisibility mutually modulate each other and the production of visibility always also means the production of invisibility; and when visibility is always an ambivalent status, just like invisibility, then it is not more and more visibility that is needed but a different, a reflexive practice.[64]

Anak-Anak Srikandi not only emanated from a critique of the very structures of power within the dominant field of visibility, but also engaged in the reflexive practice called for by Schaffer. This critical practice of representation is reflected in both the overall conception of the collaborative film project, as described in chapter three, and the autoethnographic episodes themselves. Thus, the film's collaborative, "shared space" (Elder 1995, 101) simultaneously functioned as a "reflexive space" (Schaffer 2008, 162), which is dependent on "empathetic distance" or "disidentification." Schaffer explicitly identifies Muñoz's (1999) concept of "disidentification" as a powerful tool for reworking and reformatting dominant modes of representation.

In the next two sections, I will discuss two examples of disidentification and demonstrate how the directors of the autoethnographies, through the subversive strategy of performative drag, were able to "transform a cultural logic from within [existing dominant discourse]" (Muñoz 1999, 11f).

[64] "Denn wenn Sichtbarkeit und Unsichtbarkeit sich gegenseitig modulieren und die Produktion von Sichtbarkeit immer auch die Produktion von Unsichtbarkeit bedeutet; und wenn Sichtbarkeit immer ein ambivalenter Status ist, ebenso wie Unsichtbarkeit, dann kann es nicht um immer mehr Sichtbarkeit gehen, sondern um eine andere, eine reflexive Praxis."

Denaturalizing Femininity

In *Deconstruction,* the director Stea Lim plays with gender stereotypes and conventional notions of Indonesian femininity, thereby engaging in what Muñoz (1999, 81) calls an act of "queerly reflexive performance practice." The performative subversion in Stea's video reveals that gender and the heterosexual norm are fictive cultural productions. Through the usage of subversive drag, she challenges the dominant model of femininity and simultaneously denaturalizes the Indonesian *kodrat wanita,* which is a "religiously-inspired code of conduct based on women's intrinsic 'nature'" (Wieringa 2003, 75). Judith Butler (1993, 232) has described femininity as "a forcible citation of the norm," which, as I shall demonstrate here, can be subversively reiterated and recited through the strategy of drag.

The title *Deconstruction* already hints at the director's critical stance and her previous engagement with gender and queer theories. In fact, the film is a direct reference to Judith Butler's argument that gendered and sexed identities are performatively constituted. In the first chapter of *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity,* Butler ([1990]1999, 43f) writes,

> Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being. A political genealogy of gender ontologies, if it is successful, will deconstruct the substantive appearance of gender into its constitutive acts and locate and account for those acts within the compulsory frames set by the various forces that police the social appearance of gender.

In her account of the discursive fabrication of gender, Butler draws on Simone de Beauvoir's (1949, 281) famous claim that "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." Viewed from this perspective, the term "woman" has to be understood as a *becoming*, as something that is discursively *done* and not an ontological given. Hence, gender should be viewed as a process that can also be undone or, as Butler puts it (1997, 157f), that is open to "subversive resignification." The deconstruction of allegedly "natural facts," especially of the perceived authenticity of femininity, is the main aim of Stea's film.

Figure 6: Opening scene in Deconstruction *by Stea Lim*

The first scene of *Deconstruction* (Figure 6), which is accompanied by a pounding techno soundbed infused with traditional *gamelan,* features sped-up footage of cars moving through ferocious traffic at one of Jakarta's most prominent spots, *Bundaran Hotel Indonesia* (Hotel Indonesia Roundabout). Right in the middle of the roundabout, one can see one of the city's landmarks, the *Monumen Selamat Datang* ("Welcome Monument"), which is composed of bronze statues of a man and a woman waving in a welcoming gesture.[65] Since the democratic opening, it has been a popular place for protests and political rallies. This highly symbolic location provides the backdrop for the director's first-person narration:

> This is the multicultural city where I grew up. The urban concrete jungle with millions of people from various cultural backgrounds. My culture has a fixed idea of a good woman: a good daughter, a good wife, and eventually a good mother. That's unfortunate for me. Because as a woman, I might fulfill only one third of these expectations. Don't women also have a need to express themselves freely, creatively, emotionally, and sexually? So what do you do when your aspirations contradict what your society expects you to be? What if a woman doesn't desire a man, and desires a woman instead?

The opening of *Deconstruction* serves to establish the filmmaker's main problem: society's "fixed idea of a good woman" and her failure to fulfill these hegemonic expectations. Her subject position as a self-identified lesbian prevents her from becoming the ideal Indonesian woman, that is, a "good wife, and eventually a good mother." But Stea does not surrender to the dominant ideology propagated by both religion and the state, which renders non-normative genders and sexualities socially incompatible (see also chapter five). On the contrary, she questions the *kodrat wanita* and instead argues for women's emotional

[65] The *Monumen Selamat Datang* was constructed under Sukarno to welcome visitors to the 4th Asian Games, which were held in Jakarta in 1962.

and sexual self-determination. Indeed, with her film Stea is pointing to possibilities outside of the "heterosexual matrix" by suggesting an alternative life model with goals other than heterosexual marriage and motherhood.

The video's second part establishes a new aesthetic and narrative space. The sequence, which is accompanied by non-diegetic traditional Javanese music, starts with a zoom in on a woman who is wearing a red fluffy boa and a faux fur over a bright red dress. The performer is showing off her colorful (and also fake) Louis Vuitton purse. When she moves her head to the left, the image cuts to a full-body shot of a woman dressed in a Srikandi costume, slowly drawing her bow. The film's next two shots show a performing Balinese dancer and a woman wearing a traditional Chinese gown. In the latter, the woman in the Chinese costume is slowly cooling herself with a hand fan made from bamboo strips.

Figure 7: Woman with fur, boa, Louis Vitton purse

Figure 8: Woman in Srikandi costume

Figure 9: Woman performing as Baline dancer

Figure 10: Woman in Chinese gown

Moments later two more female characters join the "discursive stage" (Bronfen 2000, 116): a young girl in school uniform sitting on a slide surrounded by brightly colored plastic balls, and a career woman dressed in an androgynous black suit and a blue *jilbab* (headscarf).

In many ways, the women are stereotypic images of Indonesian femaleness prevalent in dominant discourses. Their appearances reflect, and simultaneously reify, ideal conceptions of feminine attractiveness and therewith also idealize heterosexuality. As the film progresses, however, it becomes clear that this dominant conception of femininity is only inscribed on the performers' bodies so that it may then be jettisoned in an act of critical disidentification. Accordingly, the ensemble's first female character throws her fur on the floor and removes her heavy makeup. In the subsequent shot, the "Chinese woman," who is now only visible from her waist downwards, takes off her underwear—

not sexy ladies' undergarments as one would expect, but instead green checked boxer shorts. This unsettling image is followed by a number of scenes in which the performers remove their long wigs, thereby revealing their authentic selves.

Deconstruction is not solely a disidentification with hegemonic gender norms; it is also a reflexive critique of colonial discourses that continue to orientalize and objectify the "exotic Other." The "schoolgirl," for example, is a disidentification with the stereotypical image of Asian women being freely available for the sexual satisfaction of Western men. In the scene, the girl first picks plastic balls from her bag and then brings a hand to her blouse to remove a further ball from each breast (Figure 11). Here again, the director plays with audience expectations. This scene mocks and defies the schoolgirl (uniform) fetish, a trope prevalent in Japanese and Western pornography intended for straight, male audiences. Furthermore, the figure of the "schoolgirl" also reminds Indonesian viewers of the so-called *perek* (*perempuan eksperimentil*, "experimental girls"), a high-level category of sex workers wearing school uniforms, who in the 1980s and 1990s used to hang out in malls offering transactional sex.[66] Although the "Asian school girl" motive is part of a misogynist culture, it is subverted here through the comical device of plastic-ball breasts, which immediately desexualizes the situation. Later, the girl, too, removes her wig and exposes her short hair and butch style.

Figure 11: Schoolgirl taking a plastic ball from her breast

The theatrical staging of femininity in *Deconstruction* comprises what Butler ([1990]1999, 101-180) calls "subversive bodily acts." It is an effective example how gender can be

[66] I thank Saskia Wieringa for this additional information.

repeated differently, making clear that it is just a copy of a copy. First, the appearance of bodily fixity and natural gender identity is established; then, this supposed givenness is deconstructed through striptease. The constructed nature of gender is further emphasized by the choice of location. Placed out of context in an undefined wood-paneled room with heavy green-velvet curtains and artificial lighting, the various enactments of gender appear anything but "natural."

The women's removal of their clothes and wigs to reveal their true selves—masculine-looking women with short masculine haircuts—symbolizes disidentification with dominant femininity. Such revelation is a standard drag-queen move to show that the drag queen's "appearance is an illusion" (Newton [1972]1979, 103). In this case, the drag performance is all about transformation. However, unlike most drag acts, where "[t]he performance of drag plays upon the distinction between the anatomy of the performer and the gender that is being performed" (Butler [1990]1999, 175), in *Deconstruction* the anatomy and gender of the performers are coherent. Here we have women dressing up as women, thereby performing as drag queens and not as drag kings, which would have involved them dressing up as men. However, this lack of disjunction between sex and gender is no less subversive, since it undermines normative gender roles by "expand[ing] the realm of gender possibilities" (ibid., xx). Its interventionist quality lies precisely in the revelation of an alternative femininity, one predicated not on female traits but on female masculinity.

The feminine female-to-masculine female drag in *Deconstruction* resembles, although with a twist, the "layering" tactic that Halberstam (1998, 260f) describes as one specific mode of "kinging," which is the performance of male nonperformativity. Although the drag ensemble in Stea's film does not perform dominant maleness, they nevertheless make use of the "layering" technique by allowing "femaleness to peek through, as some drag queens do in a camp act" (ibid., 260). Here, however, dominant femininity is layered over female masculinity. The disclosure of female masculinity puts normative Indonesian imaginations of beauty and ideal womanness into crisis, as short manly hairstyles are not in accordance with accepted gender norms. In fact, the apparent masculinity of the women is suddenly at odds with their supposed femaleness. They are now visible as persons who do not fit the hegemonic gender binary. With the removal of the obvious markers of normative femininity—long hair and makeup—gender is rendered ambiguous, posing the question, "What is a 'real' woman, and by implication, what is a 'real' man?"

The representational strategy used in *Deconstruction* recalls Esther Newton's description of a butch lesbian dressing up as a drag queen. In this instance the performer appropriated the traditional gay cultural practice of camp to theatrically enact femininity. Interestingly, Newton ([1996] 2000, 66) reads this as a practice intended not "to destabilize gender categories as such, but rather to destabilize male monopolies and to symbolize and constitute the power of the lesbian minority." The way Stea uses camp in her film suggests a similar critique of gay male dominance in cultural spaces. It is certainly a statement, showing that women-who-love-women can use camp and "be as gay as a gay man" (ibid., 87). The director's employment of camp may stem from the lack of humor she experienced in Indonesian lesbian hangout spaces. Stea even told me once that she actually feels more like a gay man, because she does not identify with the seriousness of most lesbians she knows. For this reason, she prefers hanging out and have fun with her gay male friends than going to lesbian parties. The main aim of her film was nevertheless the subversion of the *kodrat wanita* and the denaturalization of femininity. So far, my analysis has focused on the film's work of disidentification. In the following section, I will reflect on its utopian potential.

The film's final section consists of a single quotation: "Some women choose to follow men, and some women choose to follow their dreams. If you are wondering which way to go, remember that your career will never wake up and tell you that it doesn't love you anymore." The traditional music, which the spectators already know from the previous sequence, continues to play. At the moment when the name of the quotee—pop diva and gay icon Lady Gaga—is revealed, the music suddenly changes back to the techno track from the beginning of the film. At the same time, the scene slowly fades into the final shot: a close-up of two women passionately kissing (Figure 12). The colorful strobe lights in the background and the techno beat that now functions as a nightclub soundtrack signify that one has entered a female same-sex subculture, the *dunia lesbi* (lesbian world).

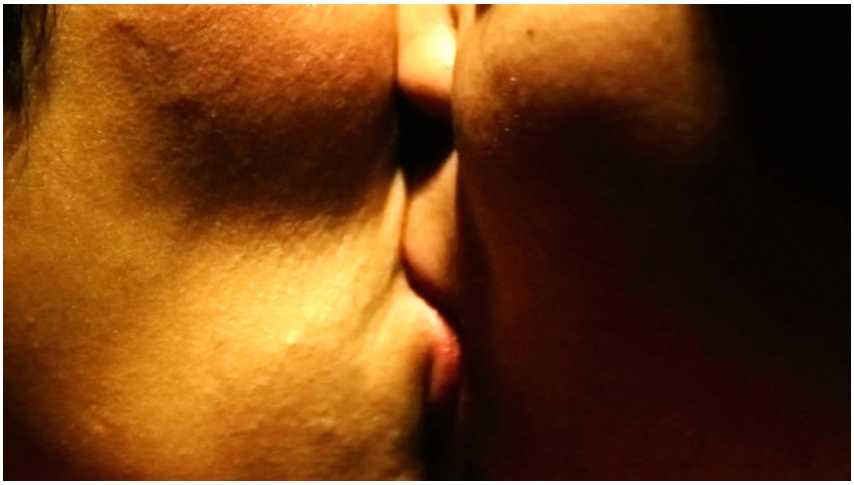

Figure 12: The kissing scene

The kiss, which is most probably the longest lesbian kiss in the history of Indonesian cinema, closes the narrative circle of Stea's queer autoethnography.[67] In a way, it is a straightforward answer to the questions the director poses in the film's opening segment: "So what do you do when your aspirations contradict what your society expects you to be? What if a woman doesn't desire a man, and desires a woman instead?" In the view of Stea, the only right thing to do when a woman loves another woman is to live your same-sex desire against all odds, opposing the pressures of society. The excessive length of the 30-second kiss only emphasizes her point. The "live your life, live your dreams" message is also evident in her choice of the Lady Gaga quotation, which holds that independent women don't need men and should focus instead on their own careers.

Parody and drag are not only potentially subversive strategies but also enable the women in *Deconstruction* to assert their sexual and political agency; they reclaim the abjected female body as a site of critical engagement and self-empowerment. Elisabeth Bronfen (2000, 121) offers a succinct summation of the re-appropriation of bodies as a medium for creative self-expression through the act of drag:

> In the course of this chatoyant transformation, the body emerges as the site of an open montage of diverse representations of the self, as the site at which different designs of the self converge and diverge again, without fully subjecting themselves to the telos of clear and final closure.

[67] It should be noted here that kisses (heterosexual and homosexual alike), especially kisses on the lips, are usually prohibited in Indonesian films. When the censorship board sees them as "arousing one's passion," kisses have to be cut (Paramaditha 2012, 75-77; Murtagh 2013, 116).

It is exactly this resistance to "final closure," the openness to the multiplicity of subject positions and subjectivities, that the director is striving for. As Stea noted in the press kit, "It [*Deconstruction*] is to acknowledge that these women could act and conform to what society expects of them, but some of them choose another way of expressing themselves. These acts don't make them less of a woman; on the contrary, these show their strength as women." By inscribing alternative femininities into the normative gender spectrum, the film seeks to rewrite the dominant script of ideal womanhood.

With *Deconstruction*, Stea has created an affirmative space that allows for "the existence of subjects who do not conform to the phantasm of normative citizenship" (Muñoz 1999, 4). The final scene, in particular, offers what Muñoz (ibid., 23) calls "a powerful utopian proposition"—the imagination of a public sphere in which sexual minorities are no longer marginalized, harassed, and scapegoated.

Denaturalizing Masculinity

Hello World! by Imelda Taurinamandala is another conscious critique of gender norms and a successful example of how binary gender regimes can be destabilized. Whereas *Deconstruction* focuses on revealing hegemonic femininity as culturally produced, *Hello World!* challenges the naturalness and authenticity of male masculinity primarily by drawing on the director's own lived gender-variant experience. Although the film could also be analyzed in terms of its symbolic subversion, I am more interested in the filmmaker's deployment of subversive strategies. The film's subversiveness is reflected not only in its form, which may be categorized as an experimental cinematic essay, but also in the inclusion of Imelda's photographic work, which is reminiscent of that of queer artists like Catherine Opie and Del LaGrace Volcano. Like the powerful photographs of Opie and Volcano, Imelda's self-portraits show how the female body becomes, or rather is made, masculine. At the same time, she "offers a glimpse into worlds where alternative masculinities make an art of gender" (Halberstam 1998, 40).

Before I engage in a close reading of Imelda's embodiment of female masculinity, I need to return to the difficult topic of terminology. The director's self-positioning under

the label "girl boy whatever"[68] obviously complicates the usage of universal gender-marked terms. With her refusal to conform to the normative gender categories "man" and "woman"—that is, by claiming a non-binary subject position—Imelda may be included in the category "transgender."[69] Nevertheless, this gender transgressive term, whose definition is ever evolving, is itself not unproblematic. As Blackwood (2010, 28) notes, the term is now also a fixed identity category and thus does not properly account for genders in flux. Furthermore, "transgender" does not necessarily signify alternative sexual desire, as there are both homosexual and heterosexual people within the "transgender" category. As an alternative, Halberstam (1998, 152) advocates the term "transgender butch," which accounts more explicitly for same-sex desire and "masculine identifications within a female body," or, in other words, acknowledges gender-variant lesbians.

The complicated web of gender and sexual variances within and across subject positions makes it clear that it is imprudent to use static identity categories. Therefore, to acknowledge Imelda's gender ambiguity and to avoid foreclosing the complexity of her multiple subjectivities within her non-binary subject position, I follow Blackwood (2010), drawing on Halberstam (1998), in using the descriptive term "masculine female." Since this word does not connote sexuality either, I should add that here we are not dealing with heterosexual female masculinity but rather with a form of female masculinity that includes the sexual desire for non-normative and/or normative female-bodied individuals. Imelda does identify at least partially with the label "dyke" or "lesbian." From now on, I follow the director's preference for a gender-unmarked term by avoiding either female or male pronouns and instead use the gender-neutral third-person pronouns "s/he" and "he/r" (see also Wieringa 2007; Blackwood 2010). Imelda's fragmented subject position is also reflected in he/r film's "not lining up" (Muñoz 1999, 86) of sound and image, a common characteristic of queer autoethnography and essayistic film works.

Hello World! starts with some of the director's reflections on he/r childhood experiences. Over images of the houses on her parents' street, Imelda narrates in a poetic

[68] In one of the *Anak-Anak Srikandi* episodes, namely *No Label* (dir. Afank Mariani), the majority of the anthology's directors participated in a playful exercise where they had to choose labels to explain their self-definition in terms of gender and sexuality. In the context of this game, Imelda came up with the "girl boy whatever" label. The women utilized creative word combinations to express their subject positions, including "andro-femme," "andro-butch," and "pansexual," among others. This illustrates the endless variations and possibilities of gender, challenging dichotomous gender notions.

[69] Susan Stryker (1994, 251) defines transgender as an "umbrella term that refers to all identities or practices that cross over, cut across, move between, or otherwise queer socially constructed sex/gender binaries." Jason Cromwell (1999, 127) understands transgender even more broadly, and with the problematic inclusion of transsexuals, as "genders that exist outside the binary of two."

third-person voiceover the dream of a little girl who wants to be a boy:

> Once upon a time, in this street, there was a girl who liked playing with her friends, dressed up as a prince. From a very young age she had liked having short hair, wearing trousers. She wanted to be a boy and just play. But it was not easy. She was forced to wear dresses and to grow her hair long. Secretly she dreamed that something would change and she would wake up as a boy. Her dream remains a dream. What else could she do but feel irrelevant and accept her fate? In some ways, she is still dreaming.

This childhood narrative is similar to other stories of young girls with boyish traits (see Boellstorff 2005, 159-161; Blackwood 2010, 67-87; Wieringa 2012, 524). The practical enactment of masculinity, or rather boyishness, is apparent here in Imelda's interest in playing boy's games, wearing boys clothes, and having short hair. Furthermore, Imelda recounts a common story of problems with parents stemming from the child's gender non-conformative behavior. Imelda's early subjectivity as a *tomboi* was actively challenged and discouraged by h/er parents, who forced h/er to "wear dresses and to grow her hair long." From h/er accounts, it seems that Imelda did not fight he/r mother's efforts to reorient he/r and bring he/r in line with the normative female gender. Instead, "she dreamed that something would change and she would wake up as a boy." In the film, this dream is emphasized by a random little boy who enters the frame right after s/he has finished this sentence. In real life, however, this "dream remains a dream."

We now find ourselves inside a house, where in a half-body/medium shot we can see the legs of a woman, between which sits a baby. In the foreground are two toys: a teddy bear and a racing car. Gesturing to the two objects, the woman says to the baby, "Sasi, choose your toy! This one or that one? Which one?" Since the baby does not react to this, she asks Imelda, who is filming the situation, for help. It remains unclear, however, if Imelda has helped the little girl or not. No voice is directing the baby, but there might have been a gesture by Imelda behind the camera that the audience is not aware of. Somehow or other, the toddler happily crawls over to the toy car, grabs it, and looks directly into the camera (Figure 13). From the personal interaction of the woman with Imelda behind the camera, we can assume a close kin relationship between them. The scene may be interpreted in many ways. Given the context, I read it as a symbolic visualization of Imelda's unfulfilled wish to fully enact he/r masculinity during childhood. The baby girl, Sasi, chooses the racing car over the teddy bear, just as Imelda probably would have done if h/er boyish interests had been recognized and approved by h/er mother. This scene also shows, albeit in a very simple way, that gender acquisition is a learning process. As

Blackwood (2010, 84) argues, "One is not born with the necessary traits of womanhood or manhood but learns them throughout life."

Figure 13: Sasi chooses the racing car

In *Hello World!*, Imelda's inability to be a *tomboi*, and thus the denial of access to boys' spaces, in the early years of childhood is symbolized by the fences in front of the houses shown at the beginning of the film. The fence marks the boundary between the house and the street, whereupon "the house" is understood as the private and female realm and "the street" as the public and male realm, reflecting the common practice of sex segregation in Indonesia. The idealized gender dichotomy is upheld through a narrowly defined view of what boys and girls are supposed to do. For example, whereas girls are expected to help in the household from an early age, boys enjoy greater freedom and are allowed to play on the streets after school.

Later in the film, we learn that Imelda's expression of masculine gender is further discouraged by means of scary stories told by h/er mother, as Imelda narrates:

> Her father wasn't around much. Her mother was everything to her. She [the mother] sang lullabies. She stayed awake all night when the children were sick. She also told stories, beautiful and scary stories. What scared her [the little girl] most was a story about people who threw stones at other people who had the same dream as her. Only later did she understand that her mother was afraid that something horrible might happen to one of her children.

Here the mother addresses the vulnerability of gender-ambiguous people, who often fall victim to mockery and, even worse, physical violence in public spaces.

By using scare tactics, which identified Imelda's female masculinity as a problem, the mother seeks to influence the behavior of her daughter in order to save her from negative experiences.

The issue of vulnerability is further addressed later in the film, when Imelda narrates the following: "The mother loved her children intensely. That's why the girl was grounded." Whereas as a child Imelda did not understand the strict policing of he/r gender expression, an experience that obviously hurt he/r when s/he was young, as an adult s/he puts h/er mother's restrictions into perspective and retrospectively interprets them as motherly love. This is further emphasized by the choice of visuals that accompany the voiceover. The spectator sees three consecutive close-up shots of Indonesian dishes, presumably cooked and presented by Imelda's mother (Figure 14).

Figure 14: One of the dishes cooked by Imelda's mother

A mother's love for her child is expressed here through the metaphor of food. By framing food as a symbol of love, Imelda positions h/er mother as a good mother, that is, a mother who provides her child with the food that s/he loves. Compared with Imelda's close relationship to h/er mother, h/er father, who "wasn't around much," remains a distant, almost unknown person. This is most obvious in the scene where Imelda films him watering plants in the front garden of the family home. During the filming, the father raises his eyes repeatedly and glances at Imelda. His look seems dismissive of Imelda's activity, which can be read as a sign of his general incomprehension of he/r gender variant personhood.

Significantly, this scene comes directly after what is the most subversive segment of the film, in which the director includes h/er photographic artwork. In a way, this photo segment is the answer to the rhetorical question posed at the beginning of *Hello World!*: "What else could she do but feel irrelevant and accept her fate?" Years later, as an adolescent, s/he has finally found the answer. Not only can s/he now freely enact h/er masculinity, but s/he is also able to creatively "turn stigma into strength," as Halberstam (1998, xii) has described for her own empowerment project, of which her seminal book *Female Masculinity* is one result. Imelda makes "an art of gender" (ibid., 40), which manifests itself in the form of intriguing self-portraits, two of which she strategically depicted in h/er filmic autoethnography.

The first photograph is a close-up shot of half of h/er smiling face, showing h/er chin with facial hair (Figure 15). At first sight, the facial hair appears to be real. However, put in relationship with the following self-portrait, the artifice becomes apparent.

Figure 15: Imelda's chin with facial hair

The second photograph is shot from a medium distance, depicting Imelda from the waste up. Here s/he is posing half-naked in the middle of a room, wearing typical men's attire: baggy pants with a belt, boxer shorts that poke out in a boyish way, and a baseball cap. H/er upper body is topless, h/er arms are folded above h/er head, and several tattoos are visible on h/er arms; s/he has a moustache. H/er gaze is directed right into the camera (Figure 16).

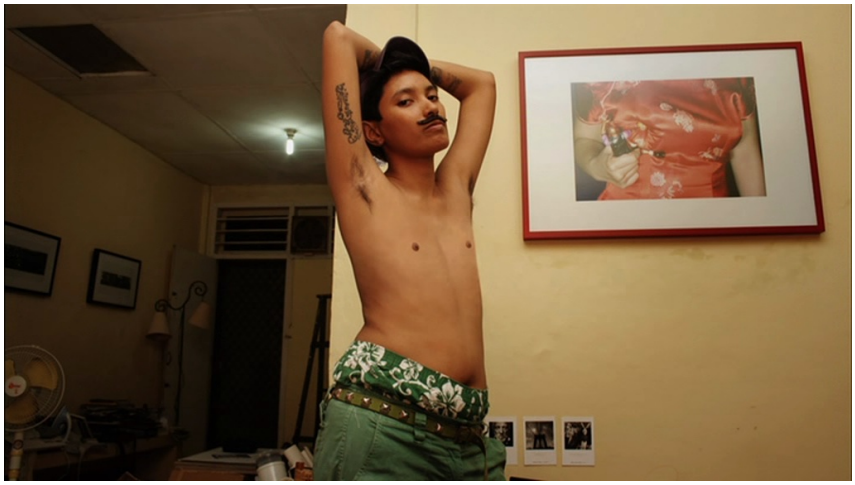

Figure 16: Imelda posing topless

What is especially striking about the second image is the supposed realness of the depiction of dominant male masculinity. Only at second glance does one notice that there is something awkward about this photograph. In the picture, Imelda strikes a typical female model pose. The arms placed above the head help to accentuate the shape of the body. Given this very sensual and feminine pose, one would expect to see female breasts, but there are none. Instead, the audience sees the flat, slender chest of a prepubescent boy. Only upon closer inspection does one realize that it must have been manipulated with photo-editing software. Photo manipulation is combined here with the use of props, such as facial hair and male clothing, which is a common strategy of drag kings to "produce a plausible masculinity" (Halberstam 1998, 258).

Imelda is well aware of the practice of drag kinging. For example, in 2009 s/he participated in a drag king workshop led by French transgender performer Océan LeRoy during the Q! Film Festival. This does not mean, however, that h/er masculinity can be reduced to the theatrical imitation of maleness on stage or in photography. Rather, the photographic images in *Hello World!* make visible the continuity between Imelda's own alternative masculinity and the performance of dominant masculinity. As Halberstam (1998, 244) has shown, in some cases "the line between male drag and female masculinity is permeable and permanently blurred." In a way, Imelda also practices the aforementioned technique of "layering" in he/r photographic work. Although the modality in photography is a very different one, the effect is somehow similar when the female posture is combined with the artificial erasure, and thus masculinization, of Imelda's breasts. The final product is an alternative, female masculinity, which is a disidentification with dominant masculinity

in a way that "neither opts to assimilate within such a structure nor strictly opposes it" (Muñoz 1999, 11).

The last part of the film shows that Imelda's embodiment of masculinity is now permitted, and even accepted, by h/er mother. Indeed, for the first time, both are seen together in front of the camera (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Imelda listens to he/r mother's story

The audience takes part in an intimate moment in which the mother tells Imelda a humorous children's story—probably one of the stories she told Imelda when s/he was little. The story goes as follows:

> There was once a mother and father who were very stingy. They loved to hide their food in their bedroom. One day they bought durian fruits and ate them secretly in their room. Then they fell asleep without washing their hands or wiping their mouths. The next morning the children knocked on their door: "Mom, Dad!" They kept knocking until the mother answered: "WHAT?" Their mouths had ripped open. The parents' mouth had been ripped open and their hands were gone. The rats had eaten their hands and mouths because they had forgotten to wash them. The moral of the story is: Don't be stingy. Or your mouth will be ripped open.

Then Imelda asks, "What about sharing?" And the mother answers, "In life, we have to learn to share. Don't be greedy and selfish. Because we live with others who might not have so much food. So remember to share." With this message, the film ends on a rather positive note, asking for generosity toward other people. Such generosity, which in the story is closely related to the sharing of food, might equally refer to broadmindedness and acceptance of people who transgress the norm. *Hello World!* calls for self-conscious affirmations of difference and simultaneously expands our sense of gender-variant realities.

Just as Stea Lim's *Deconstruction* reimagines femininity, Imelda's queer autoethnography reimagines masculinity as "masculinity without men" (Halberstam 1998). Both films recognize alternative genders, giving visible form to Judith Butler's famous assertion that there is no such thing as a "real" man or a "real" woman. In this way, the films also support Halberstam's (1998, 24) claim that "we need wider parameters for gender identifications"—a claim that still holds true for the 21st century.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that autoethnography is both a powerful instrument to subvert heteronormativity and an effective "tool for expressing subjugated knowledges" (Pidduck 2009, 444). Furthermore, I have demonstrated how, through the use of drag, the two directors in question consciously and effectively challenge hegemonic gender norms and reveal the fabricated nature of heterosexuality. With their films they destabilize the common assumption that women must look feminine, comply with the *kodrat wanita,* and only desire men. Through the directors' performance of self, the social constructedness of identity is made visible and simultaneously undergoes a "destructive analysis" (Handler 1985). Following Muñoz (1999, 145), I have suggested that disidentificatory performances allow one to imagine novel ways of being-in-the-world and may thus "conjure the possibility of social agency within a world bent on the negation of minoritarian subjectivities."

Certainly, one of the main motivations of all of the directors involved in the *Anak-Anak Srikandi* project was to take control over their images. They have actively broken the code of silence to appropriate their sexual voice. They wanted to tell stories from their own lived experiences and capture the complexity and diversity of queer lives, thereby contesting the misconception of a homogeneous LGBT community. Undoubtedly, autoethnography is about problematizing unified identity imaginaries. That this analysis has focused on just two of the eight autoethnographies in *Anak-Anak Srikandi* should not diminish the importance of the anthology as a whole. Each episode displays different modalities of self-representation and hence different ways of being a woman-who-loves-women in Indonesia. The eight autoethnographies hint at the great variance of the women's lived experiences and subsequently at the multiple forms of resistance to the effects of heteronormativity, some more visible than others.

By occupying the heteronormative cinemascape through first-person storytelling, the directors of *Anak-Anak Srikandi* entered the discriminatory sphere of the mainstream and added a "lesbian presence where it has routinely been excluded" (Muñoz 1999, 86). Thus, through the queering of dominant forms of visual representation, or, in other words, through the making strange of mainstream media, the filmmakers created an alternative space that allowed them to account for the specificity of their lived experiences, that is, the plurality of experiences and identifications of abjected "homosexual Others," destabilizing the notion of a universal lesbian subject. I see the autoethnographies that comprise *Anak-Anak Srikandi* not only as a successful example of what the "affirmative visibility" (Schaffer 2008) of subaltern subjects can look like, but also as enactments of the directors' political subjectivities. This self-constitution as "subjects of rights" (Isin 2009, 371) makes them into "activist citizens." Accordingly, the cinema screen becomes an activist screen.

This discussion would be incomplete without considering the ambivalence of visibility. As explained earlier, visibility is not linked to recognition in a straightforward way. In this regard, I expounded the universalizing Western concept of coming out with its putative emancipatory power. It has been argued that "coming out of the closet" might be an empowering experience for some Indonesians, but a disempowering one for others. After all, leaving the closet also means that the outted individual enters a new normative value system that does not always bring the promised freedom and instead invites new oppressions and ways of regulating behavior. When scrutinizing the power of visibility, it becomes obvious that the notion of liberation through coming out is much more complicated than progressive activists often assume, as it always produces a different closet (see Butler 1991). This insight raises questions about the positive effects of a visibility project like *Anak-Anak Srikandi.* Following Schaffer (2008), I have suggested that making visible the hitherto invisible is not enough; rather, what is needed is a reflexive and thus critical practice of representation that is not only geared toward the transformation of hegemonic social conditions but also acknowledges shortcomings and gaps in its own cultural production.

Taken together, the two chapters of this work's second part suggest that collaborative filmmaking and the method of autoethnography are not only queer-feminist interventions that contribute to processes of transformation for the individual filmmaker, but also potentially useful tools for empowering the wider LGBT community in Indonesia. In the next two chapters I focus respectively on the creation of an activist space by the Q!

Film Festival and the public outrage that ensued when the existence of the festival was made public by foreign press.

PART THREE:
THE ACTIVIST SPACE

CHAPTER 5

SEXUAL POLITICS AND MORAL DISCOURSES IN INDONESIA

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the growing homophobia in Indonesia. In 2010, there were more attacks against the Indonesian LGBT community than ever before. In March of that year, the fourth regional meeting of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Association (ILGA), which was to be held in Surabaya (East Java) and set to be attended by 150 international activists, was forced to cancel due to protests by members of the Defenders of Islam Front (FPI, Front Pembela Islam), the Islamic Communication Forum (FUI, Forum Umat Islam), and the Indonesian Council of Muslim Scholars (MUI, Majelis Ulama Indonesia). In the media FPI member Aziz Abdulrrahman was quoted as follows: "Gays and lesbians are moral terrorists, these people should be banned from the East Java province" (Hariyadi 2010). One month later, members of the FPI stormed and broke up a human rights training workshop for transgender activists conducted by the Indonesian National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) in Depok, West Java. In September 2010, the FPI rallied in front of four international cultural institutions that hosted screenings of the annual Q! Film Festival (Q!FF), threatening to burn down the venues if the festival was not stopped within 24 hours.

Although homophobic sentiments have existed in Indonesia since the Dutch colonial period (Boellstorff 2004; Wieringa 2009, 213; Wieringa 2010b, 130), public homophobia and violence toward gay, lesbian, and transgender individuals, especially during LGBT events, are a relatively new phenomenon. How can the emergence of homophobia in post-Suharto Indonesia be explained?[70] The prominent Indonesian LGBT rights activist and anthropologist Dédé Oetomo (2001b) argues that growing homophobia is the "flipside" of the democratic opening. In looking to explain this phenomenon, Oetomo points to the increased public awareness of alternative sexualities, starting with sensationalizing media reports in the 1980s and HIV/AIDS campaigns in the 1990s. He concedes, however, that this might be just one explanation among many and suggests that attacks on LGBT people have to be understood in line with a parallel increase in raids on

[70] There were a few reported cases of violent disturbance in the late 1990s and in November 2000 in Kaliuarang, near Yogyakarta (see Oetomo 2001b; Boellstorff 2004).

pubs, brothels, and discotheques, most of which are carried out by thugs and not by "people of true religious faith."

Similarly, anthropologist Tom Boellstorff (2004, 469) avoids treating Islam as the direct source of what he calls "political homophobia," a concept that he uses to describe "an emergent cultural logic linking emotion, sexuality, and political violence." While he agrees that the appearance of homophobia is informed by Islamic sexual norms, he does not see religion as the determining factor. In his view, the presence of Islam as such is insufficient to explain the sudden violence and moral outrage directed at non-normative sexualities and genders. Boellstorff's main argument is that the violent emotional response toward the public presence of gay men, and to a lesser extent *warias*, is not so much an expression of religious belief as a reaction to feelings of shame (*malu*) caused by the perceived threat that homosexuality (and transgenderism) poses to normative ideals of national manhood in post-Suharto Indonesia. As he further explains, "With the nation under perceived threats of disintegration, attempts by non-normative men to access civil society can appear to threaten the nation itself" (Boellstorff 2004, 479).

Although *malu* may play an important role in homophobic attacks, I do not believe that this tells the whole story; the situation seems to be far more complex. Saskia Wieringa (2009, 215) argues that there is a clear political agenda behind the recent acts of homophobia, and I would add to this interpretation economic motivations. But can we really make a clear-cut distinction between secular and religious motives? A major problem with this kind of argumentation is the very separation of religion from politics, an invention of the modern West, as the political theologian William Cavanaugh (2009, 5) emphasizes. He asks the question, "How could one … separate religion from politics in Islam, when most Muslims themselves make no such separation."[71] It is worth quoting Cavanaugh's concluding words regarding this problem at length:

> I am certainly not arguing that Muslim radicalism is really political and not really religious. … [T]here is no coherent way to separate a universal essence of religion from that of politics. To attempt to do so in this case would severely distort the nature of Muslim radicalism by imposing an alien theoretical framework on it. Muslim radicalism is best understood as a theopolitical project, which means that any attempt to isolate religion from the political and social contexts of Muslim radicalism will fail to grasp the full reality of Muslim anti-Western sentiment.

[71] Indonesia is not an entirely secular state, as stated in Indonesia's state philosophy, Pancasila. Pancasila is based on the following five interrelated principles: 1) belief in the divinity of God; 2) a just and civilized humanity; 3) the unity of Indonesia; 4) popular sovereignty arrived at through deliberation and representation or consultative democracy; and 5) social justice for all Indonesian people.

In his book *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict*, Cavanaugh (2009) seeks to dismantle the persistent religious-secular/religion-politics dichotomies and therewith the "myth of religious violence," which not only blind one to the existence of secular forms of violence but also serve to authorize and justify the US "war on terror." Along similar lines, political scientist Ian Wilson (2006, 2012) refrains from making all too pessimistic and hasty interpretations of the increasing frequency of violent vigilantism as indicative of growing Islamic militancy.[72] As Wilson (2012, 2) argues,

> Islamic vigilantism does not necessarily have a direct connection to Islamic "radicalization" per se in any strictly ideological or theological sense, and has more to do with the dynamics of Indonesia's post-authoritarian social and political transformation, in particular spatial politics, patron-clientism, and shifting power relationships at the local level.

In this chapter, I wish to consider under what conditions religious groups in Indonesia turn violent. Specifically, I will analyze the FPI's performance of moral outrage and its staging of violence against the Q!FF in Jakarta in 2010. I argue that recent cases of homophobic attacks against high-profile cultural and political LGBT events by Islamic militia groups cannot be explained solely with reference to the increasing role of political Islam in Indonesia, but have to be understood in a wider context. To this end, I will analyze the FPI attack in light of ongoing power struggles between different religious and political groups and actors who are jockeying to gain the upper hand in the governance of the post-New Order nation. In developing my argument, I follow Sidel (2006, 2007) and Schaefer (2013), both of whom refrain from addressing the construction of "religious violence" as such but nevertheless call for a closer examination of the specific social, political, and economic conditions that give rise to moral outrage and violence under the banner of Islam in Indonesia.

I begin this chapter by giving a brief overview of New Order gender ideologies and sexual politics. While scholars have proposed a variety of definitions of the concept of sexual politics, in what follows I shall use the definition suggested by Saskia Wieringa (2003, 71f).[73] For her, the term refers to "the regulation of bodily, emotional, mental, symbolic and aesthetic sensations; in this process, the pleasures, as well as fears and obligations, are constructed in which the private and the public merge to create imbricating networks of power relations." Elsewhere, Wieringa (2010, 129) has argued that "Sexual

[72] Among those authors who make hasty interpretations, Wilson particularly refers to Zachary Abuza (2007) and Rohan Gunaratna (2002).
[73] See, for example, Kate Millet's (1969) influential book *Sexual Politics* for a different understanding of the concept.

politics … are at the core of processes of nation formation and are deeply embedded in the religious, cultural, ethnic, and national identities of their subjects."

In the section that follows, I outline the political processes of democratization and Islamization, which both shape how the state regulates sexuality and at the same time create the conditions for the proliferation of homophobia. Then, in the final two sections, I give a brief overview of the FPI and analyze its protests against the Q!FF. I have chosen to focus on the FPI because the group has been at the forefront of homophobic attacks against high-profile LGBT events. In order to give insight into what happened on the day of the protest against the Q!FF, I refer to a twelve-minute documentary video made by Indonesian filmmakers Lucky Kuswandi and Ucu Agustin, who, as soon as they heard about the FPI rally, took their cameras and rushed to the scene to document the events as they unfolded. I further refer to interviews and informal conversations with the festival organizers.

New Order Gender Ideologies and Sexual Politics

The New Order (1965-1998) was a quasi-militaristic regime with a strong hierarchical structure, an authoritarian paternal leadership, and a consumer-driven economy. Throughout this period, sexuality and the heterosexual norm played an important role in the construction of the nation. This is reflected by the state's family principle (*azas kekeluargaan*), which defined the nuclear patriarchal family—with father, mother, and ideally two children—as the smallest unit of the nation. The head of the nation-family was President Suharto, the ultimate father figure and the self-described "Father of National Development" (*Bapak Pembangunan*), who controlled all aspects of daily life (Wieringa 2002, 2003; Suryakusuma 2004; see also Tiwon 1996 and Sullivan 1991 for the family principle ideology). And just as *Babak* Suharto was the leader and protector of the patriarchal New Order state, within the smaller framework of monogamous marriage it was the husband-father who was the head of the family and managed the household income.

New Order sexual politics also promoted a monogamous citizen-family, with both divorce and polygamy regulated through the government decree Peraturan Pemerintah/PP No. 10, 1983, which particularly circumscribed the sexual behavior of male civil servants (Suryakusuma 1996). But it was the sexuality of women that became the major subject of state control. The female body was regulated through family planning programs with the aim of keeping birth rates low in line with Suharto's developmental project (Wieringa

2003). Although the New Order conveyed a strong heteronormative ideology, homosexuality had not yet become the target of state sanctions (Boellstorff 2004, 470). Unlike governments in the neighboring countries of Malaysia and Singapore, the New Order did not explicitly mention homosexuality in its regulations (Offord 2003).

Central to the New Order's family ideology were the notions of "fatherism" (*bapakism*) and "motherism" (*ibuism*). This predominant New Order gender ideology of *bapak-ibuism* determined hegemonic understandings of manhood and womanhood, "with *bapak* as primary source of power and *ibu* as one of the mediums of this power" (Suryakusuma 2004, 169). Both notions were strongly shaped by Javanism, nationalism, and heteronormativism, such that the ideal Indonesian man and woman could not be imagined outside monogamous heterosexual marriage. Both *bapakism* and *ibuism* were controlled by the state apparatus and mediated through specific vehicles that served to propagate these gender ideologies and thereby bind the citizens to the state (Suryakusuma 2004, 161; see also van Wichelen 2007, 121).

In her seminal work *State Ibuism: The Social Construction of Womanhood in New Order Indonesia* ([1988] 2011, 105), Julia Suryakusuma introduces the concept of "State *Ibuism*," a gender ideology that "had the effect of domesticating Indonesian women so that women were tamed in the accumulation process, segregated in the development process and de-politicized, as was the entire society, through the concept of the 'floating mass.'" In developing this idea, Suryakusuma draws upon Madelon Djajadiningrat's (1987) notion of "ibuism" and Maria Mies's (1986) concept of "housewifization." The ideology of "State *Ibuism*" is essentially an extension of the notion of "ibuism," which merges the cultural-historical values of the Dutch colonial bourgeois and the Javanese elite (*priyayi*) and supplementa this with economic policies based on the Western concept of "housewifization." As Suryakusuma ([1988] 2011, 9) further explicates,

> Under *Ibuism* women should serve their men, children, the family, the community and the state, and under housewifization, their labor should be provided willingly, at an inappropriately low cost (if any) but also free from any expectation of real prestige or power.

The main goal of this feudalistic ideology was to de-politicize women through the process of domestication. This was further endorsed by the Indonesian Women's Congress (KOWANI, Kongres Wanita Indonesia), the official New Order umbrella institution for government-run women's organizations, through their "Five Duties of Women" (*Panca*

Dharma Wanita), which were as follows: women as loyal companions to the husband; women as procreators for the nation; women as educators and guides of children; women as regulators of the household; and women as useful members of society (ibid., 16).[74]

The two main member organizations of KOWANI, the Civil Servants Wives' Association (Dharma Wanita) and the family planning program "Family Welfare Guidance" (PKK, Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga), played a key role in the dissemination of "State *Ibuism*" and helped to cement women's (primary) role as supporters of their husbands. In his autobiography, Suharto explains how New Order women's organizations were also intended "to bring Indonesian women to their correct position and role, that is as the mother in a household [*ibu rumah tangga*] and simultaneously as a motor of development" (Suharto, cited in Tiwon 1996, 59).

Within Suharto's developmentalist and national project, the institutionalization of women's roles was further justified by the general idea that it is a woman's destiny or nature (*kodrat wanita*) to be wives and mothers. Like the ideal of the Javanese woman, whose femininity is defined by calmness, shyness, elegance, and submissiveness, the *kodrat wanita* prescribes certain assumed womanly behaviors such as obedience to males, passivity, sexual modesty, and self-sacrifice. For women, fulfilling one's duties as mothers and wives turns them not only into real women but also into legitimate and good citizens of the New Order state (see Brenner 1999). Alternative models for women who could not imagine a life as devoted mothers and obedient wives did not exist at this time (see also Bennett 2005).

In the later years of the New Order regime, the role of women was extended from the household to the public workspace. In order to fulfill his developmental agenda and transform Indonesia into a modern nation, Suharto explicitly encouraged middle-class women to join the workforce and become career women (*wanita karier*) (Sen 1998; Brenner 1999; Smith-Hefner 2005; van Wichelen 2007). As van Wichelen (2007, 66, 121) shows, this step was intended not to allow the women to become economically independent, but rather to turn them into consumers, thereby boosting Indonesia's economic growth. A *wanita karier* was still expected to put her marriage and family first and to be a devoted wife

[74] The first Indonesian Women's Congress was held in 1928 in Yogyakarta, albeit under the name *Kongres Perempuan Indonesia*. It played an important role for Indonesian women fighters during the revolutionary years. During the New Order rule, the original Kongres Perempuan was replaced by KOWANI, but it soon waned in influence following infighting between its two main factions, Dharma Wanita (organization of government wives) and Dharma Pertiwi (wives of military men) ("Women's Congress" 1999).

and mother (Brenner 1999; Hatley 1999; Sen 2002). Thus, what (at first glance) appears to be an initiative that grants women greater freedom and autonomy was just another strategy to maintain order (*ketertiban*), control (*pembinaan*), and stability (*stabilitas*) (Surjakusuma [1988] 2011, 105).

Turning private issues like family and sexuality into public affairs can be seen as one of the main characteristics of the New Order regime. Suzanne Brenner (1999, 36) explains the logic behind this political focus on private practices, which she terms "public intimacy," as follows:

> By turning public scrutiny to the private sphere, by making the moral character and behavior of women in particular a focus of concern and debate, attention could be diverted away from the issues that might, and should, give rise to a real collective politics. Tensions and anxieties that accompanied political repression, rapid and uneven modernization, and economic inequality and instability were displaced onto the figures of woman and the family.

The origins of Suharto's diversionary tactic of "public intimacy" can be traced to the founding myth of the New Order state, which legitimized his authoritarian regime for 32 years (Brenner 1999; Wieringa 2002). The transition from President Sukarno's Old Order to President Suharto's New Order in 1965 was marked by the banishment of communism through the demolition of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI, Partai Komunis Indonesia). The bloody takeover by General Suharto is now seen as Indonesia's darkest period, with an estimated one to three million people massacred in one of the largest genocides in human history.[75] According to Saskia Wieringa (2002), the catalyst for the mass killings was a carefully designed propaganda campaign initiated by Suharto and the military, in which members of the Indonesian communist women's organization, Gerwani (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia*,* Indonesian Women's Movement), were blamed for the killings of six high-ranking generals and one lieutenant of the Indonesian Army during the 1 October 1965 putsch that led to the overthrow of the Sukarno administration and eventually brought Suharto to power. This "campaign of sexual slander" spread rumors that the Gerwani women had performed an erotic dance, cut off the generals' genitals, and poked out their eyes before killing them and throwing them into a water hole at *Lubang Buaya* (Crocodile Hole) (Wieringa 2002, 287). According to numerous experts, none of these accusations were ever substantiated. The autopsies of the generals' bodies showed no

[75] See also the award-winning and Oscar-nominated documentary *The Act of Killing* (2012) by Joshua Oppenheimer.

signs of castration or torture. Nevertheless, the myth lived on and was widely disseminated in the media throughout Suharto's presidency.[76]

In her important analysis of the sexual politics behind the October 1965 myth, which ultimately lead to the annihilation of the women's movement, Wieringa comes to the conclusion that Suharto deliberately created chaos in order to overthrow Sukarno and legitimized Suharto's coup d'état. She explains the success of the campaign as follows: "This disorder struck chords with the fear of the uncontrolled sexual powers of women, a religiously inspired apprehension that women's disobedience would endanger the entire social system—Hindu notions of all-female maniacal crowds and the male horror of castration" (Wieringa 2003, 82). According to Wieringa, the myth of sexually perverted and morally deprived Gerwani women tapped into the deep-rooted fears of the (male) population that women's sexuality is potentially dangerous, threatens patriarchal power, and can lead to castration and murder. Women's sexuality as well as their social and political autonomy was therefore met with great suspicion during the New Order rule, and it was at this point in time that "the intimate sphere of the family came to replace an active politics of the public sphere" (Brenner 1999, 16). The constructed link between women's political activism and perversion justified the New Order sexual politics that purposively pushed women out of the traditional "men's world" of politics back into their "proper place," the domestic sphere. For the sake of the stability of the nation at large, women had to follow the *kodrat wanita*, and their sexuality and behavior had to be controlled and regulated.

As Wieringa (2002, 2) has shown, the consequences of Suharto's "campaign of sexual slander" were wide-ranging and continue to impact women's sexual emancipation and empowerment in a democratizing Indonesia. The association of women's political agency with sexual perversion, violence, and obscenity persists to the present day. Many politically active women and women's organizations in contemporary Indonesia are still confronted with this stereotype. But whereas under Suharto the supposed sexual depravity of Gerwani women was mainly explained with reference to the evil influence of communism, in post-Suharto Indonesia Gerwani were additionally accused of a new kind of "perversion": promoting "lesbianism" (Wieringa 2000). Just as communism was used to demonize womanhood in the New Order, so "lesbianism" is now deemed to pose a danger

[76] The anti-communist propaganda film *Pengkhianatan G30S/ PKI* (The Treachery of the 30th September Movement/Indonesian Communist Party) was screened annually every September on national television, in commercial cinemas, and in all Indonesian public schools.

to Indonesian women, ultimately threatening the heterosexual order. As Wieringa (2000, 444) concludes, "Lesbianism may in many ways be seen as a more up to date version of castration, as lesbian desire effectively renders male heterosexual desire powerless." The rationale behind the new accusations remains the same, as she further elaborates (ibid., 453):

> The recent accusation that Gerwani, with its politically active membership, would have "promoted lesbianism" suggests that women's political autonomy can be compared to women's sexual autonomy. In both cases, the perceived "immorality" of the women concerned is regarded not only as a threat to the moral fabric of society, but also to the political stability of the nation.

Like the Gerwani activists during the New Order period, today's politically active women, secular women's organizations, and LGBT rights activists are challenging traditional gender ideologies by demanding sexual autonomy and equal rights. In fact, when cracks began to appear in the political structure of the New Order regime, it was women who were the first to protest against Suharto's politics (see Wieringa 2000). The women's persistent public demands for critical changes paved the way for further direct action by students, whose nationwide demonstrations eventually lead to President Suharto's downfall in May 1998.

Having summarized the New Order's sexual politics and gender ideologies, in the next section I shall demonstrate how the past plays an important role in contemporary debates on public sexuality and morality in a democratizing and Islamizing Indonesia.

The Regulation of Sexuality in the Era of Democratization and Islamization

With the fall of the New Order regime, Indonesia entered a new era of democratization and Islamization, dramatically changing the socio-political landscape. Many new political, social, and religious actors entered the public sphere, fighting for recognition. Within a short period of time, Indonesia saw the formation of a vigorous media and the establishment of civil society, with thousands of NGOs spreading across the archipelago, among them many women's and LGBT rights organizations. Women's groups and feminist organizations, in particular, soon regained political influence on the governmental level and were able to critique gender-related state policies (van Wichelen 2007, 248).[77] What is more, the newly obtained freedom of speech also advanced discourses on sexuality. For the first

[77] One of these newly established organizations fighting for women's rights was the National Commission for Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan*),* set up in Jakarta in 1998. In the same year, the Indonesian Women's Coalition (Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia, KPI) was founded (see van Wichelen 2007).

time, issues such as sexual desires, homosexuality, and reproduction were openly discussed in the public sphere (Blackwood 2007, 2010).[78] The increased public concern with sexuality has to be understood in relation to the changing mediascape in post-New Order Indonesia, which was characterized by newly gained press freedom[79] and a surge in film production, soap operas (*sinetron*), tabloids, talk shows, books, and other media dealing with issues associated with sexuality (Hatley 1999, 2002; Marianto 2000; Bianpoen 2002; van Wichelen 2007, 108f).

Reformasi opened up space for the blooming of Muslim movements and facilitated the rise of political Islam, including Islamist vigilante groups, who quickly declared war on moral decadence. Long repressed and controlled by the Suharto administration, many Islamic groups entered the political arena eager to finally take part in political decision- and law-making processes (Hefner 2000; van Wichelen 2007, 36).[80] Islam also became more visible in the public sphere, as evidenced by, for instance, more open expressions of piety, the increased spread of Muslim media, and the circulation of religious morality discourses.

Amidst the process of these shifts toward democratization and Islamization, it did not take long for Muslim conservatives to begin to scrutinize the new visibility of sexuality,

[78] Homosexuality was first brought to public attention during the presidential elections in 2004, when the candidates where asked to give their political views on the topic. Most of them condemned homosexuality as "deviant sexual behavior" (*perlilaku seksual menyimpang*) and as being against religious morals and values (Blackwood 2007, 303).

[79] In October 1999, President Abdurrahman Wahid abolished the Department of Information and with it ended the government censorship of media dealing with controversial and sensitive issues that might provoke tensions in relation to SARA, an acronym for *Suku* (ethnicity), *Agama* (religion), *Ras* (race), and *Antar-golongan* (group, also a euphemism for class) (Sen & Hill 2007).

[80] For much of Suharto's reign political Islam was repressed because it was seen as a potential threat to the regime's authority (Hefner 2000; van Wichelen 2007, 49f). In the early 1990s, however, in light of an upcoming election, Suharto became aware of the need to secure the votes of conservative Muslims and made a radical departure from prior policies (Sidel 2007, 151). As van Wichelen (2007, 51) put it, "They [the Suharto administration] needed to bring Muslimness into their political image so as to keep the confidence of the Indonesian people." The "Islamic turn" in the late New Order period enabled the incorporation of Islam into the public sphere and the political landscape (Hefner 2000; van Wichelen 2007). The new policies led to the founding of the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI, Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Se Indonesia) under the leadership of B.J. Habibie, the then Minister of Research and Technology (Sidel 2007, 151). Furthermore, it was around this time that the Islamic Dakwah (missionary work, proselytization) movement emerged, which led to the founding of the Islamist Prosperous Justice Party (PKS, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera). But as long as Suharto was in power, the possibilities for promoting substantive Islamization remained highly constrained "from above" (ibid., 152). This control was only lifted with the *Reformasi*, after which the Islamist movements were able to proliferate.

resulting in sexual moral panics[81] and intense public debates around women's bodies and pornography. The conservatives soon started placing pressure on the state to govern morals and to regulate representations of sexuality in public (van Wichelen 2007). In her doctoral dissertation, *Embodied Contestations: Muslim Politics and Democratization in Indonesia Through the Prism of Gender*, Sonja van Wichelen (2007) describes different incidents where public discussions of issues around sexuality, or what she calls "sexuality talk," were challenged by "morality talk."[82] One of her examples concerns the fierce controversy surrounding the popular East Javanese *dangdut*[83] singer Inul Daratista, who upset the conservative public with her famous drilling dance (*goyang ngebor*) in 2003. At the forefront of morality in the Inul controversy was the Council of Indonesian Muslim Scholars (MUI),[84] which deemed her dancing to be forbidden by Islam (*haram*) and thus not suitable for public performance. The MUI further discredited Inul by arguing that her style of dancing was a form of pornographic action (*pornoaksi*) and should therefore be banned.

Both van Wichelen (2007, 122) and Wieringa (2009, 216) point out that erotic performances by female singers are nothing new in Indonesia; in fact, the archipelago has a rich tradition of dances that involve sexually suggestive movements. So, why did Inul's erotic dancing lead to widespread moral outcry? In looking to understand the issue of moral sexual panics, Saskia Wieringa's theory (2009, 205) of "postcolonial amnesia" is particularly instructive. Wieringa (ibid., 208) defines postcolonial amnesia as a "process of selectively memorizing certain aspects of a past while ignoring such aspects as are politically inconvenient to those who control the mechanisms to create a hegemonic vision

[81] The term "sex panic," which is derived from Stanley Cohen's ([1972] 2002) concept of "moral panic," was coined by anthropologist Carole Vance (1984) to refer to public outrage and conflicts arising over issues of sexuality and morality (Irvine 2008, 1). In a moral or sex panic, negative affects are mobilized toward constructed scapegoats, such as sexual minorities. According to Cohen ([1972] 2002, 1), "societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person, or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests." The public response to such threats is often a demand for greater government regulation and a call for a return to "traditional values."

[82] By "morality talk," van Wichelen (2007, 110) means "discursive strands focusing on moral issues that intervene normatively in public matters and through which particular groups position themselves in the public debate."

[83] *Dangdut* is a very popular music genre in Indonesia. It combines elements of traditional Indonesian music, Bollywood film scores, and Arabic pop (see Frederick 1982).

[84] MUI is a highly political body (it was in fact established by the government in 1975) that is often able to influence secular state politics and public policies. In its role as a guide for the Muslim community, MUI also issues religious rulings (*fatwas*) against cultural products like movies or music. For instance, in 2011 MUI issued a *fatwa* against the controversial film "?" by renowned Indonesian director Hanung Bramantyo, because "the movie damages Islamic values and morale" by suggesting that there exists another God besides Allah (Hariyadi 2011). The film was declared *haram* and thus forbidden under Islam. Nevertheless, this prohibition has to be understood more symbolically than literally, because *fatwas* are non-binding for Muslims in Indonesia and only the government has the ultimate power to make legally binding decisions, such as whether or not to ban movies.

of society." Hence, the Inul controversy, its related sexual hysteria, and the public amnesia regarding the tradition of erotic female performances can be understood as part of a strategy developed by conservative political and religious forces to establish what Wieringa calls "postcolonial patriarchal heteronormativity." According to this theory, (pre-)colonial forms of women's sexual autonomy, including, as we shall see later, same-sex practices, are conveniently ignored in order to subjugate women.

Three years after the Inul controversy, Indonesia witnessed another sexual moral outrage, precipitated by a renewed discussion of the Pornography Bill in parliament. This time the anger was directed against the publishers of the Indonesian version of Playboy magazine.[85] Shortly after the first issue was launched in April 2006, angry protests erupted and the Playboy office in Jakarta was violently attacked by the FPI (La Moshi 2006; Wizar & Manan 2006). The controversy culminated in the arrest of the director of Indonesian Playboy, Ponti Carolus, and the editor, Erwin Arnada.

As van Wichelen (2007, 125) argues, the outrage surrounding the publication of an Indonesian Playboy magazine and Inul's drilling dance contributed significantly to the political and public debate regarding the controversial Pornography Bill. In fact, both examples follow the typical course of a sexual moral panic identified by Cohen ([1972] 2002). According to Cohen, the first stage is a media spectacle around a certain issue that is strategically constructed as a threat to society. Influenced by the mostly simplistic and sensationalizing depictions of the issue in the media, many pious citizens are overcome with concern, which eventually gives way to mass public outrage. In the case of Inul, and later Playboy magazine, this was the moment when many Islamist groups and Islamic parties, like the Islamist Prosperous Justice Party (PKS, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera), seized the momentum and started aggressively advocating for the implementation of a Pornography Law as the only solution to the country's "moral decay." The enraged public was soon convinced that the law should be passed sooner rather than later for the sake of the moral integrity and stability of the nation. This exemplifies the final stage in a moral panic, when order is re-established through the implementation of a law or social regulation.

The Bill on Pornography, which was first proposed in 1999 and passed as the Pornography Law on 30 October 2008 (Law No. 44 of 2008 on Pornography; UUP, Undang-Undang Pornografi), provoked a fierce national debate between its supporters (the

[85] The Indonesian Playboy did not contain explicit nudity like the "Western" versions of the magazine.

government and some Islamist groups) and its opponents (liberal activists and cultural producers) (Allen 2007; van Wichelen 2007, 123f; Pausacker 2008; Bellows 2011).[86] The main bone of contention was the broad and ambiguous definition of pornography. However, it was Article 25 of the Bill that caused the greatest public outcry. Under this Article, the display of "sensual parts" of the body, defined in Article 4 of DPRRI 2006 as "genitals, thighs, hips, buttocks, navel and female breasts, whether in the whole or in part" (cited in Pausacker 2008), would be criminalized and punished with either one to five years in prison or a hefty fine. This would not only have restricted the way women were permitted to dress in public, but would also have discriminated against diverse non-Islamic cultural practices and traditional arts, dances, and performances that partially expose body parts or include nudity, such as those practiced in Bali and Papua. Visual artists and filmmakers were concerned that the Bill would impact their artistic freedom of speech by requiring them to avoid using images that might be considered sexually arousing, like nudity or even kissing.

In its final form, the Pornography Law permits non-Islamic expressions of culture, but pornography is still defined very broadly. Thus, what counts as pornography in contemporary Indonesia is more or less a matter of subjective judgment (Pausacker 2008; Bellows 2011, 229). What is even more worrisome to many Indonesian activists is that the law states that the public has the right—and is expected—to denounce what they consider pornography and to report violations of the law to the authorities. Many critics claimed that this will leave the door wide open for vigilante groups to take the law into their own hands anytime they deem public morality to be under threat (Pausacker 2008). As we shall see later in this chapter, their fears were justified.

Many LGBT and human rights activists also expressed concern that the Pornography Law could be used to criminalize same-sex relationships. However, to date there have been no reported cases of the Indonesian government using the Pornography Law to prosecute gays and lesbians. Undoubtedly, the situation for LGBT people is far more severe on the regional level, such as in parts of South Sulawesi and West Java, where one finds a direct criminalization of same-sex practices and homosexuality. In fact, the

[86] Feminists, women's organizations, and Muslim gender activists were among the first to enter the debate on the Bill. For example, as early as 2004 prominent lawyers and women's rights activists Nursyahbani Katjasungkana and Ratna Batara Munti, from the Indonesian Women's Association for Justice and Legal Aid Institute (LBH-APIK, Lembaga Bantuan Hukun Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan), warned that the Bill would be a substantial breach of equal rights since it mainly discriminates against women, whose bodies and behaviors are under moral scrutiny (van Wichelen 2007, 134).

Pornography Law marked the climax of a trend of "legal Islamization" that began much earlier in the provinces than on the national level following the policy of state decentralization initiated by President Habibie in late 1998 (Suryakusuma [1988] 2011, xii; Wieringa 2005b, 4).

This new policy granted regional governments greater legal and economic autonomy and allowed them to implement their own bylaws (*Perda*, *Peraturan Daerah*). Many regions and several cities established *Shari'a*-inspired *perdas* on public order and decency, enforcing Islamic moral values that not only restrict women's rights but also affect LGBT people by prohibiting and criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual activities. The Jakarta-based LGBT organization Arus Pelangi has identified more than 30 regions that have bylaws directly criminalizing LGBT people, with the most draconian punishment of LGBT people being in the province of Aceh (North Sumatra) (Ariyanto & Triawan 2008). In most of these *perdas*, same-sex activities fall into the category of prostitution, which is defined in a very broad way. In addition, sexual practices are clearly divided into moral and immoral behavior, with "homosexuality," along with "sexual abuse" and "sex with animals," categorized as "deviant" and thus being prohibited.

Notwithstanding regional criminalization of same-sex activities and the existence of the Pornography Law, there is no national sodomy law in Indonesia. The State Penal Code (KUHP, Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana) only prohibits sexual acts between persons of the same sex when one of them is underage, as stated in Article 292. Indonesia's State Penal Code (in Dutch: Wetboek van Strafrecht voor Indonesia) was put into effect in 1918 and is based on Dutch Colonial Law (the Netherlands Indies Criminal Code). The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights has long planned to modernize the Penal Code, which was last revised in 1964, in order to bring it in line with Indonesian "cultural norms," customary laws (*adat*), and contemporary religious practices. A commission first began to work on the draft Penal Code revision in 1981, and the document has since been rewritten and postponed several times by different ministers under changing governments (Blackwood 2007, 300).

In 2012, the current government finally submitted the Bill of Indonesian Penal Code to the House of Representatives (DPR, Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat) for further debate. The discussion on the latest revision started in March 2013. The proposed revision has been met with much public resentment, as the government's suggested changes are more backward than progressive. In a further attempt by the state to regulate social order

and morality—fields that were previously controlled solely by local bylaws—the Draft Penal Code outlaws adultery and cohabiting unmarried couples, for which the penalties would be up to five years in prison for the former and a maximum one-year sentence for the latter. LGBT activists, in particular, have criticized the planned punishment of cohabiting couples, since this specific article of the Code could also be used to threaten same-sex relationships (Pasandaran & Bastian 2013).

Revision of the Indonesian Penal Code began almost one year after President Yudhoyono set up the Anti-Pornography Task Force in February 2012. Headed by the Minister for Religious Affairs, Suryadharma Ali, the Task Force was intended to ensure the implementation of the Pornography Law. As a first step, Suryadharma decreed a ban on miniskirts on account of their being pornographic. The ban was implemented in response to concerns raised by parliamentary speaker Mazurki Alie, who publicly noted that "There have been a lot of rape cases and other immoral acts recently, because women aren't wearing appropriate clothes" (Marks 2012). The debate over women's proper clothing goes back to the former governor of Jakarta, Fauzi Bowo, who six months before commented on a series of sexual assaults and rapes in public minivans, suggesting that women should not wear short skirts and pants when using public transport.

The government's renewed attempts to regulate women's sexuality and morality (i.e. to criminalize their bodies) angered many women and women's rights organizations. For instance, the deputy head of Komnas Perempuan (the National Commission on Violence Against Women), Masruchah, dismissed the new Task Force as violating women's rights (Sihite & Sianipar 2012). In a similar vein, the Indonesian Women's Coalition for Justice and Democracy (KPI, Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia) stated the following in the Jakarta Globe (Sihite & Sagita 2012):

> The forming of the anti-pornography task force is not needed and not important because there are many other societal problems that need to be accorded more serious attention, such as corruption prevention, the empowerment of people in villages and isolated areas, poverty eradication, poor nutrition, [and] social conflicts.

Criticism came not only from women's rights organizations and activists, however, but also from oppositional political parties. As the local press reported, most critics agreed that the sudden establishment of the Anti-Pornography Task Force was meant to distract the public from the corruption scandals rocking the President's ruling party and from planned fuel price increases (Primanita et al. 2012).

As van Wichelen (2007, 122) shows for the Inul debate, there is reasonable cause to believe that certain panics or political measures like the Anti-Pornography Task Force are strategically created to divert the public's attention from other, more serious problems. But like van Wichelen, I also believe that the diversion theory cannot fully account for the complex overarching issues involved in post-New Order power politics. Several authors have suggested that moral sexual panics often occur in times of political and socio-economic transitions and in states with divided public opinion (see Cohen ([1972] 2002; Irvine 2008; Herdt 2009). Such conditions are clearly evident in contemporary Indonesia, as the following discussion of the FPI makes apparent.

A Street-Level Anti-Vice Movement: The FPI

The aforementioned decentralization reform and subsequent fragmentation of state power played a major role in the rampant development of what Wilson (2006, 266) has called "violent thuggery," which refers to the mass proliferation of Islamic paramilitary, militia, and vigilante groups, such as the Defenders of Islam Front (FPI, Front Pembela Islam), the Indonesian Council of Jihad Fighters (MMI, Majelis Mujahedeen Indonesia), the Islamic Reform Movement (GARIS, Gerakan Reformis Islam), the Islamic Student Movement (GPI, Gerakan Pemuda Islam), and the Islamic Community Forum (FUI, Forum Umat Islam). According to Wilson (2006, 266), however, such thuggery (*premanism*) has existed throughout Indonesian history, from the colonial period to the New Order authoritarian regime. For instance, Suharto hired militant groups, such as the paramilitary organization Pancasila Youth (PP, Pemuda Pancacsila), to undertake the massacre of hundreds of thousands of alleged communists in 1965-66.[87] In fact, during Suharto's rule state collaboration with paramilitary organizations and street-level thugs became standard practice, and violence and extortion were normalized (ibid.).

Since the democratic opening, "state-sponsored violence" has declined, only to be replaced with a new yet analogous phenomenon: the democratization and privatization of violence (Wilson 2006, 266, 268-270). As mentioned above, the new political freedom not only meant that Islamic parties could participate in national elections for the first time, but also cleared the way for rivaling paramilitary and vigilante groups to freely pursue their

[87] Most of the murders carried out by the Pancasila Youth took place in Medan and other sites in Sumatra. In East Java, Nahdlatul Ulama's (NU) youth wings, GP Ansor and Banser, committed the murders. In Bali, black-shirted PNI youth (Indonesian National Party) carried out the killings (see Wieringa 2002).

economic interests and political agendas independent of state patronage. The FPI was one of the first militant groups to proliferate throughout Indonesia after Suharto's downfall. Since its founding by Misbahul Alamand and Habib Shihab Rizieq in Jakarta in August 1998, the FPI has had a close relationship to political elites, including former President B.J. Habibie, former Vice-President Hamzah Haz, and senior members of the military (Wilson 2006, 282, 289). As Jahroni (2008, 20) confirms, "Habibie reportedly gave a huge amount of money to several Muslim groups, including the FPI, to pave the way for his presidency." The FPI has an estimated 150,000 members in 26 provinces. Its membership is comprised mainly of two different groups: poor unemployed youth and men, and lower-middle-class students from Islamic educational institutions (Wilson 2006, 283; Wilson & Nugroho 2012).

Unlike other militant Islamist groups such as Laskar Jihad and Hizbut Tahrir, the FPI never lobbied for the creation of an Islamic state. Instead, FPI was among a number of Islamic political parties and Muslim groups that pushed for the incorporation of the so-called Jakarta Charter (*Piagam Jakarta*) into the Indonesian Constitution during the constitutional reform (1999-2002) (Wilson 2006, 284). The Jakarta Charter would have required all Indonesian Muslims to adhere to *Shari'a* (see also Hosen 2007).[88] However, when the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR, Majelis Musyawarah Rakyat) voted down the Jakarta Charter, the political hopes of many of the Islamic groups to Islamize the Indonesian state and establish Islamic law were finally defeated (see Hosen 2007; Butt 2010, 300).[89] It was at this point that the FPI vowed to take the socio-cultural route, pushing for the Islamization of society through the steady reformation of public morality (Wilson 2006; Hasani & Naipospos 2010).

Re-inventing themselves as a "street level anti-vice movement" (Wilson 2006, 283), the FPI quickly became the most visible and notorious of the Indonesian Islamist groups, frequently making headlines in the national and international media for their raids on vice (*razia maksiat*) and for organizing large-scale mob violence against religious minority groups, most notably the Indonesian Christian community and the Muslim sect Jemaah

[88] Diverse Islamic organizations proposed the inclusion of the Jakarta Charter in the 1945 Constitution, which was written following Independence. But due to strong objections from Christians and nationalists, the Sukarno and Hatta government refrained from including the Charter in the final version of the Constitution (Hosen 2007; Butt 2010, 282).

[89] Many Islamic and Islamist groups were deeply disappointed with the rejection of the Charter. Sidel (2007, 208) suggests that it is against this background that one should understand so-called religious violence in Indonesia in recent years, viewing it "not as evidence of an ascendant, insurgent Islam, but as a symptom of the weakness of those who have tried to mobilize in its name."

Ahmadiyah, whom they perceive as "religious deviants." As we will see in the final section of this chapter, the FPI's central leadership in Jakarta has also identified the LGBT community as one of its strategic targets for instigating sexual moral outrage.

Most scholars agree that the FPI does not represent a clearly articulated school of Islamic thought. The FPI's violent activities are motivated not by religious concerns but rather by secular interests, such as political power and economic benefits (see Wilson 2006, 2012; Hasani & Naipospos 2010). More specifically, Wilson (2012, 1f) argues that the

> FPI and other similar Islamic vigilante groups constitute populist forms of "pragmatic Islamic militancy" whose appeal comes less from a coherent ideological or political program than the opportunities offered for combining the pursuit of instrumentalist livelihood strategies, the expressing of a broad range of grievances and resentments toward Indonesia's post-authoritarian state.

Elsewhere, Wilson (2006, 275) states that "the new vigilantes combine the pragmatic self-interest and reliance on violence of the preman [gangsters] with a justificatory moral ideology."

The FPI mobilizes fear and anger to serve its political agenda. Yet the group is not the only actor that benefits from public sexual moral outrage. It seems likely that the state also profits from public outrage and therefore leaves the moral battlefield to militant vigilante groups. This strategy is in fact nothing new in Indonesian history, but can be seen as a continuation of New Order tactics, such as the aforementioned sexual panic and subsequent mass hysteria created by Suharto and the Army in 1965 around the communist women's movement *Gerwani* (see Wieringa 2000, 2002, 2003). Wilson (2006, 292) characterizes the allegiances between political elites and vigilante groups as "strategic partial-patronage," which is "largely tactical and for the achievement of short-term goals." He further suggests (p. 289) that

> At times the support of vigilante thugs has benefited particular figures within the fragmented and competing elites. At the same time temporary patronage has allowed vigilante groups to operate with impunity and gain a degree of political leverage for agendas divergent from official state interests.

If we examine the recent violent protests against LGBT events more closely, a common pattern of police behavior becomes apparent. Although police were present during most of these protests and raids, they did not prevent violence from occurring and thus failed to ensure the safety of the participants (see also Liang 2010). It is no secret that the national police chief, Timur Pradopo, not only helped to set up the FPI in late 1998 but also regularly attends the group's anniversary celebrations. On 7 August 2010, five days before

the start of Ramadan and about six weeks before the protests against the Q!FF, Pradopo and the then Jakarta Governor, Fauzi Bowo, attended the FPI's 12th anniversary celebration in Petamburan (Central Jakarta), where the organization has its headquarters. The Jakarta Post ("Fauzi Police Chief Hobnob" 2010) reports that the visit of the government officials occurred just one day after the FPI leader, Rizieq Shibab, had shown up at the Jakarta Police headquarters "to 'offer' the group's 'services' in enforcing a city bylaw [from 2004] banning some entertainment establishments from operating during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan." Despite growing opposition and public protest against the FPI and other vigilante groups, the national and Jakarta police chiefs and the city's former mayor continued to partner with vigilante-like mass organizations, deploying them as "security enforcers to guard communities" (Tampubolon 2011).

Only a few months after Fauzi Bowo announced closer collaborations between vigilante groups and the police, WikiLeaks published a report on the Internet that uncovered the symbiotic relationship between the FPI and the national police, claiming that the Indonesian law enforcement body provides funding to the group in order to use them as "attack dogs" (Saragih 2010). Although both the FPI and the national police were quick to deny the allegations outright, the information published by WikiLeaks corresponds to similar rumors that have been circulating in the public sphere for years. Similarly, some of the Q!FF organizers expressed the suspicion that the real reason behind the FPI protests was that the government was trying to divert public attention away from a huge tax scandal involving one of the candidates for the Indonesian presidency, which had made headlines prior to the festival.

According to social anthropologist Henky Widjaja (2012), one has to take the attitudes of mainstream Islamic organizations into consideration in order to fully understand the state's reluctance to take firm action against the FPI. Most of the time, both NU and Muhammadiyah have remained silent and their statements have been ambiguous.[90] Widjaja interprets this reservation as a sign that these mainstream groups are concerned with the same assumed social depravities as the FPI and agree on the fact that the state does not do enough to prevent or combat immorality, and thereby to respect the concerns of Muslims. Therefore, NU and Muhammadiyah can benefit from the activities of Islamist vigilante organizations without getting their hands dirty or risking their own reputation. At

[90] The traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and the modernist Muhammadiyah are the two biggest mass-based Islamic organizations in Indonesia (see, e.g., van Wichelen 2007).

the same time, not taking a firm stance against the FPI might be a well-calculated move on the part of NU and Muhammadiyah to garner the support of conservative Muslims, which these mainstream organizations need for their own political and religious agendas. As Widjaja (2012) further points out, the main argument voiced by both NU and Muhammadiyah against an outright ban on the FPI is the group's "important role" in upholding the Qu'arinc edict of "embracing virtue and rejecting vice" (*amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar*) among the Indonesian Muslim community. Indeed, Wilson (2006, 288) sees the FPI's moral justification for using violence as one of the reasons why the state has not sought to ban the organization, even though this would be within its power. To sum up, I agree with Widjaja's (2012) point that as long as the FPI enjoys elite backing and fulfills a certain role deemed beneficial to both the state and Muslim organizations, it seems likely that the FPI and other vigilante groups will continue to flourish, serving as assistants to the state.

The FPI's Moral Campaign against the Q! Film Festival

The current homophobic violence in Indonesia is directed at two targets, namely, high-profile LGBT events and LGBT individuals. Whereas assaults on individuals mainly occur at the hands of police, attacks on events are the preserve of Islamist vigilante groups, which use Islam and moral discourses on sexuality as a way to press for their political rights. In what follows, I will take the FPI's moral outrage over the 2010 Q!FF as a case study to demonstrate how the group strategically stages violence as part of its struggle for control in the Indonesian political landscape.

The moral outcry against the Q!FF was precipitated by a provocative headline in an online newspaper. A couple of days before the opening of the festival, John Badalu, the co-founder and then still director of the Q!FF, was interviewed by the French News Agency (AFP, *Agence France-Presse*) about the festival. When John read the headline a few days later, he could not believe what it said: "Gay film festival opens in Muslim-majority Indonesia" (Arshad 2010). The article quickly went viral in Indonesia after it was picked up by *Republika,* the country's leading Islamic daily newspaper, which has a large conservative readership (Hefner 1997). Ironically, John was quoted in this very article as saying that the Q!FF prefers to keep a low profile in order to avoid public resistance: "We do not want to publicize the event in the mainstream local media as they are still very conservative." He continues: "Funding for the festival comes from foreign groups. We hold screenings at

foreign centers. The radicals will not dare to attack us. If they do, it is like attacking several countries in one go." These statements likely served as a call to arms for the FPI.

In a more speculative manner, John Badalu later told me that since there were no major news stories making the headlines that week, the FPI took the chance to grab the spotlight. The unusually extensive media coverage triggered by the journalist's sensationalist report might have motivated the FPI to stage the rallies. In a personal email communication I had with Ian Wilson (2013), he concurred with this assumption:

> The FPI makes calculated decisions as to which events/groups to target, to a significant degree determined by the amount of media coverage they hope to receive. This is often highly opportunistic. Hence for example their ridiculous campaign against Lady Gaga's proposed Jakarta concert: something guaranteed to garner international media attention, which it did. You can see this as a general pattern of the group.

Just as the FPI had previously focused its attacks on religious minorities, now it was the LGBT community that was strategically identified as the target group likely to garner the most public exposure.

On the morning of 28 September 2010, the FPI launched their protests against the Q!FF in front of the Centre Culturel Français; they then moved on to the German Goethe Institute, the Dutch Erasmus Huis, and the Japan Foundation. At each venue between twenty and sixty members demonstrated in front of the gates. All were men, most of them dressed in Muslim attire, consisting of long white robes and turbans. Some waved posters that showed images of the movies featured in the festival. As documented in the short film by Lucky Kuswandi and Ucu Agustin, one FPI protestor shouted, "Look at these disgusting film stills! Boys kissing boys! Girls doing other girls! What's worse is that foreign governments support this!" (Figure 18).

Figure 18: FPI protestors are showing film stills

In front of the Goethe Institute, an FPI leader read a petition through a megaphone, addressing both the Q!FF organizers and the Goethe Institute director:

> To the director of the Goethe Institute Jakarta: Through this letter, we, the heads of FPI Jakarta, demand to whoever runs this place—a place that promotes and campaigns for free sex, adultery, and other sexually deviant behaviors, such as homosexualism and lesbianism—to completely dismiss these activities within the next 24 hours. We conclude that you foreigners are purposely destroying Indonesia's next generation. Hey you, foreigners! We would like to remind you not to manipulate our generosity by supporting devilish activities, activities that are against our constitution, our religious norms, and our Eastern values. That concludes our petition. We are also attaching this letter to the President, and to the Child Protection Agency. We won't be held responsible if the general public finds out about this activity and takes this matter into its own hands. You cannot blame us, Muslims, for being anarchists! This place forces us to be anarchists. I beg you please, do not fall into Satan's trap! The Q! Film Festival must be filled with atrocious people that are lower than animals!

The FPI made a similar case in front of the Erasmus Huis, shouting the following through a megaphone:

> Tomorrow night in this venue they will screen gay films [*film homo*] and lesbian films [*film lesbi*]! And right here they will match-make, those gays and those lesbians! God save us! This country is based on the almighty God. Screening gay and lesbian films and free sex (*seks bebas*) is against religion! It goes against our nation's constitution! To those who try to corrupt the youths of Indonesia, especially Muslim youths, then we are ready to be the front line in our war against them! Allah is the greatest [*Allahu Akbar*]! Ready for Jihad?

These comments point to one of the fundamental themes within the FPI ideology, as identified by Wilson (2006), which is the aforementioned Qur'anic edict "embracing virtue and rejecting vice" (*amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar*) with the aim of liberating Indonesia and its people from Western secular, immoral, and decadent influences. This edict has served as justification for the FPI's frequent raids on "places of immorality" (*tempat maksiat*), such as nightclubs, bars, casinos, brothels, discotheques, cafés, and cinemas (Azra 2006; Wilson 2006, 21f; Hasan 2007; Jahroni 2008; Hasani & Naipospos 2010). In the group's ideological mindset, these are the product of Western free-market capitalism and are thus incompatible with Indonesian Islam. The FPI used the same rationale when accusing foreign cultural centers (and therewith the Q!FF) of "corrupting our morale," which is an invented "traditional morality," thereby threatening the very foundations of society. In this sense, the FPI's sudden focus on LGBT events can also be understood as part of its renewed campaign against what it refers to as "sipilis" (an acronym for secularism, liberalism, and pluralism).[91] The "sipilis" campaign was initiated in 2005, when the Indonesian Council of Muslim Scholars (MUI) issued a *fatwa* declaring secularism, liberalism, and pluralism *haram*

[91] *Sipilis* is also the Indonesian word for syphilis, the sexually transmitted disease.

(see Syafi'i Anwar 2007; van Bruinessen 2011). For the FPI, events such as the Q!FF are emblematic of liberalism as a morally degenerative force. Looking at the speeches given by the FPI in front of the cultural centers, one sees how the FPI made a particular issue of the fact that the Q!FF receives foreign support.

On a cultural level, the FPI argues that homosexuality is an import from the West and is therefore un-Indonesian and generally against "Eastern values" (*adat ketimuran*).[92] The FPI employs the same anti-Western rhetoric used by other Islamist groups in their support of the Anti-Pornography Bill (see Allen 2007, 104). Like the Inul controversy, the argument that homosexuality is a "Western import" can be understood as another case of strategic postcolonial amnesia on the part of conservative religious groups and political leaders, who systematically ignore historical evidence of (pre-)colonial same-sex and transgender practices (see, e.g., Oetomo 2001a; Blackwood 2005; Boellstorff 2005; Davies 2010) in order "to construct the nation as an always-already patriarchal and heterosexual entity" (Wieringa 2009, 219). The FPI clearly benefits from this discourse of difference, as it allows the organization to position the Q!FF's activities outside the norm and thereby to garner sympathy from a large number of Indonesian Muslims. It is in this context that the FPI discursively reframed a mere cultural event as a general threat to "traditional" Islamic moral values and the Muslim community at large.

The deliberate Islamization of a foreign-sponsored queer film festival in Indonesia is also apparent in this excerpt from one of the many FPI hate speeches given in front of the cultural centers:

> My holy brothers … We are prosperous only because of Islam. Nowadays, Islam is getting weak. You know why? Because many Muslims don't fight for their belief anymore. We are letting the sinners, the devils rule. What is going to happen to our children, our grandchildren? We must fight until the last drip of our blood! Let's destroy this building! This building facilitates moral decadence! Let's hope that this place won't house any homosexual acts! Homosexuals are filthy! Even animals don't behave like that! We are asking this cultural center not to destroy the holy morale of our country!

[92] The opposition between "Asian values" versus "Western values" was advocated in the 1990s by the then Prime Ministers of Malaysia and Singapore, Mahathir Mohamad and Lee Kuan Yew. While there are many definitions of "Asian values," they are generally understood to be influenced by Confucianism, promoting the principles of collectivism versus individualism, filial piety, social harmony, socio-economic prosperity, and single-party authoritarian government (Barr 2002, 39; see also Robison 1996b). When discussing "Asian values," it is important to emphasize that the concept is an ideological construct of Asian authoritarian leaders to justify and uphold their oppressive regimes. In Indonesia, *adat ketimuran* were championed by Suharto to serve his repressive-developmentalist regime. Although it is a present-day construct, the Orientalist approach already existed during the colonial era in the work of Dutch scientists, like Christian Snouck Hurgronje.

Invoking the ongoing secularization debate in Indonesia, the speaker directly addresses the "Indonesian Muslim community," holding them jointly responsible for the "moral decadence" of the country. In order to reverse this trend, the FPI call on Muslims to "fight for their belief" and to not shy away from violence. The group made it clear, however, that it "won't be held responsible if the general public finds out about this activity and takes this matter in their own hands. You cannot blame us, Muslims, for being anarchists! This place forces us to be anarchists." These words fell on sympathetic ears. The day after the FPI protests, thirty students from the University of Indonesia (UI, Universitas of Indonesia) launched a further rally in front of the Goethe Institute. The students were thought to be members of *Salam*, a conservative Islamic student group (Harkins & Haryanto 2010).

As part of their moral campaign, the FPI handed a letter of protest to all foreign cultural centers. In the letter, in which it accused the Q!FF of "screening pornographic gay and lesbian films, holding gay and lesbian beauty contests and marriage ceremonies, and recruiting youths (*anak muda*) to make them become gays and lesbians," it specifically mentioned the film *Fucking Different Tel Aviv* (2009), stating that the title is already "gross and pornographic," and noting that the movie was made in Israel, "a truly disgusting country." This movie, in particular, was seen as a severe provocation. First, the word "fucking" in the title made the FPI think it was a pornographic film, despite the fact that none of its members had seen the film and therefore had any idea whether it featured any depictions of sexual intercourse or not. Second, Israel is seen by many Muslim organizations as a major enemy of Islam. Exercising its right to report violations of the law to the authorities, the FPI pressed charges against the Q!FF organizers for allegedly screening pornographic films ("FPI Reports Festival Organizer" 2010). This would contravene Articles 20-21 of the Pornography Law, prohibiting the production, distribution, and use of pornography (DPRII 2008). This is a good example of how the Pornography Law can be abused by vigilante groups to serve their own ideological ends.

In its argumentation, the FPI appears to adopt the stance taken by the Indonesian Film Censorship Board (Lembaga Sensor Film, LSF). The LSF adheres to a legal framework within which all representations of sexuality are equated with pornography and thus viewed as taboo, since "porno" is incompatible with Indonesian socio-cultural

traditions and moral (read: Islamic) values.[93] As Intan Paramaditha (2012) shows through the example of *Perempuan Punya Cerita* (Chants of Lotus, 2007), an omnibus film produced by Nia Dinata, this logic also includes films that problematize sexuality or that address social issues like abortion, sex trafficking, teenage sexuality, and HIV/AIDS. Consequently, social issue films dealing with sexuality are put in the same category (i.e. "pornography") as pirated porn DVDs. This reflects a narrow understanding of what sexuality is on the part of both the FPI and the state, always only imagining sexuality within the hegemonic system of patriarchal heteronormativity. It is thanks to the "fiction of this 'always-already' patriarchal, heterosexist nation" (Wieringa 2009, 207) that negative sentiments toward LGBT people can be so readily mobilized.

In order to stage a protest against the Q!FF, the FPI had only to build on pre-existing public anxieties and concerns over the existence of LGBT people in Indonesia. In her article *Transient Feelings: Sex Panics and the Politics of Emotions*, sociologist Janice Irvine (2008, 2) suggests broadening the analysis of sex panics to include "their deep emotional dimensions." The protest against the Q!FF calls to mind the workings of sexual moral panics, since the former was clearly based on aversive feelings such as fear, disgust, anger, and hatred, which were used to construct homosexuality as abnormal and dangerous. Irvine calls these emotions "sex panic feelings," which are "transient because they are the product of a specific context; in its absence, they recede" (ibid., 3). Extending her work on "scripted debates" in the battle over sex education in the United States,[94] Irvine has recently turned her attention to the "emotional scripts of sex panics," suggesting that emotions are dramaturgically scripted and intentionally produced.

When examining the rhetoric used by the FPI, one can identify a specific "sex panic script" that is meant to evoke negative reactions to homosexuality. For instance, the script deployed to instigate fear and outrage against the Q!FF systematically stresses disease and danger. The FPI makes particular use of rhetoric of disgust, as evidenced by the slogans "Q! Film Festival must be filled with atrocious people that are lower than animals"

[93] According to the Indonesian censorship law, films need to be censored when they include the following images: "a) a scene showing a man and a woman in, or giving the impression of, nudity, whether it is from the front, side, or back angle; b) a close-up shot of genitals, thighs, breasts, or buttocks, with or without clothing; c) a sexually arousing kiss between a heterosexual or homosexual couple; d) the act, movement, or sound of intercourse, or anything else that gives the impression of intercourse, by human beings or animals, in any gestures, explicitly or implicitly; e) an act of masturbation, lesbianism, homosexuality, or oral sex; f) an act of giving birth, by human or animal, that can elicit desire; g) a scene showing contraceptive tools that are irrelevant and inappropriate; and h) acts that give unethical impressions" (cited in Paramaditha 2012, 77).
[94] See Irvine (2002).

and "Homosexuals are filthy! Even animals don't behave like that!" Viewed in this light, describing same-sex sexual practices as deviant, branding queer films as pornographic, and showing film images of half-naked men kissing and hugging to evoke public disgust reflects a concerted attempt on the part of the FPI to gain political influence.

In looking to explain the workings of "sex panic scripts," Irvine convincingly refers to Sara Ahmed's (2004b) concept of "sticky signs" by showing how the words and images used in such scripts "'work' emotionally through the sticking of signs to bodies" (Irvine 2008, 19). The terms of disgust used in the Q!FF debate likewise operate as sticky signs that are attached to LGBT bodies in order to make them disgusting. I suggest that the use of such labeling is part of the FPI's "moral [panic] campaign" (Herdt 2009, 4f) to influence public attitudes toward "filthy homosexuals." By constructing LGBT people as deviant, sick, and immoral and as posing a threat to the heteronormative social order, the FPI draws a boundary between worthy and non-worthy human beings. In this homophobic and heterosexist discourse, LGBT people are constructed as unwanted elements of society. They are thereby excluded and marked as non-citizens who are unworthy of state protection.

To sum up, in formulating its moral campaign, the FPI was able to draw on a vast reservoir of negative images and derogatory language already circulating in the public sphere. The media regularly sensationalizes homosexuality, framing it as a sin or a disease and constructing LGBT people (but mainly gay men) as dangerous, possessive, ruthless, and without control of their deviant behavior. Indeed, at the time of the Q!FF protests, the case of "Ryan the Slaughterer," which made headlines in July 2008, would still have been fresh in the minds of many Indonesians.[95] According to Bram Hendrawan (2009, 18), who analyzed the representation of homosexuality in Indonesian tabloid television news programs, the Ryan case not only served as a justification for generally condemning LGBT people, but also set the dramatic tone for subsequent discourses on homosexuality in Indonesia.

[95] The 30-year-old Idam Henyansyah, also known as Ryan, was accused of killing a middle-aged man in Jakarta and cutting up his body into seven pieces. In the course of the case investigation, the police found eleven more male bodies buried in the backyard of his parents' house in East Java. This extreme murder case quickly turned into a media spectacle once Ryan admitted that he had killed the man out of jealousy following an affair between the victim and Ryan's boyfriend. From then on, the media circus around the Ryan case turned its attention from the actual horror of the killings to the homosexual subtext. For the media and the public, the fact that Ryan was gay served as the main explanation for his cruel murders.

Conclusion

In this chapter it has been suggested that violence and moral outrage over pornography, polygamy, "free sex" (*seks bebas*), and homosexuality exemplify how the Indonesian state is being reconstructed through sexual politics. The struggle over the meaning and place of sexuality in Indonesia today is part of the ongoing process of defining the boundaries of the post-New Order society and the state's role in policing morality in line with Islamic standards. Further, I argued that the growing influence of political Islam cannot be taken as the sole explanation for the increasing frequency of violent attacks against sexual and gender minorities, or other minorities for that matter. While the FPI made use of Islamic edicts to protest against the Q!FF, I have shown that the motivation for the attacks was chiefly political. By means of an empirical case study, I have illustrated that the persistent religious-secular dichotomy used by many Western scholars is untenable. It is my hope that my analysis contributes to Cavanaugh's (2009) aim of doing away with the "myth of religious violence."

My analysis has also shown how the intertwined processes of democratization and Islamization in post-New Order Indonesia have informed moral politics and justified the state regulation of "immoral conduct," including same-sex sexual practices. It has become clear how Islamic values and morals have increasingly infiltrated national politics, thereby contributing to the heteronormatization of society and likewise influencing the way homosexuality is perceived by the public. Just as under the New Order, the sexual politics of the current Indonesian government is characterized by the strict regulation of individual behavior. Sexuality and female bodies have become two of the main moral and political battlefields on which fundamental questions about the future of the changing Indonesian nation-state are fought.

Following Saskia Wieringa (2009), I have further argued that moral sexual outrage and postcolonial amnesia must be understood as political strategies employed by both religious groups and political elites to "coerce people into normality" (Herdt 2009, 18). The widespread phenomenon of amnesia regarding women's political and sexual agency, including women's same-sex relations, can be traced back to earlier sexual moral panics, such as the "campaign of sexual slander" in 1965 and 1966. In this sense, strategically inflated sexual hysteria is not about pornography or sexual morality as such, but is part of a continuing effort by Islamist conservative groups and parties to Islamize the Indonesian state and to establish "postcolonial patriarchal heteronormativity" (see van Wichelen 2007;

Wieringa 2009). Part of this agenda is the Islamist construction of womanhood. It is in this respect that Julia Suryakusuma argues that "State *Ibuism*" is not yet passé, but rather persists in a new guise as "Islamist State Ibuism." In her view, the struggle over women's bodies, gender relations, and sexuality in post-New Order Indonesia "is a regressive attempt to create a social construction of womanhood aimed not just at containing and controlling women, but also at creating a society in line with a particular vision of what an Islamic society should be" (Suryakusuma 2012).

Although the Indonesian government does not directly punish homosexuality with jail sentences, it indirectly supports the FPI agenda by turning a blind eye to the latter's homophobic attacks and refusing to protect the rights of LGBT people. In fact, the state abdicates itself of its constitutional obligations to protect its citizens, and to guarantee equal treatment of all citizens under the law, when conflicts over supposedly private matters, like same-sex love, escalate into violent attacks. Despite acting as the "moral police," the FPI positions itself not as an alternative to state order but rather as assistants to the state. According to Wilson (2006, 285), the FPI is very clear about the fact that upholding the country's morality is primarily the role of the state. However, given the institutional weakness and corruption of the government, the group feels it has no choice but to take on this responsibility. Therefore, the FPI justifies its sporadic application of violence as a necessary measure to enforce the law.

In the final chapter, I go beyond state and religious discourses on sexual morals to turn my attention to the Q!FF. First, I examine how the festival performs its cultural activist practices. I then go on to show how these practices changed in light of the FPI protests and the general rise of homophobia in society. In so doing, I provide yet another glimpse of how cultural producers actively engage in the ongoing process of constructing the Indonesian nation state.

CHAPTER 6

ACTIVISM THROUGH FILM: THE Q! FILM FESTIVAL

In 2011, one year after the protests and violent threats by the FPI, the Q! Film Festival (Q!FF) celebrated its tenth anniversary. Instead of marking the occasion with a great fanfare, the organizers decided to take a cautious approach. The festival opening, which was held at the National Library in central Jakarta, lacked the joviality of former years. The subdued atmosphere was exacerbated when John Badalu announced his resignation as festival director.[96] In his farewell speech he introduced the operational manager, Meninaputri Wismurti, and the event manager, Hally Ahmed, as the new festival directors.[97] John's departure brought to an end an important chapter in the festival's history.

The FPI protests distressed the Q!FF organizers and volunteers like never before. Suddenly it became very obvious that with a greater visibility of the LGBT community more conflicts would arise in the heteronormative public sphere. To this point, the festival had always considered itself more a cultural event than a political arm of the Indonesian LGBT rights movement. The Q!FF practiced what new festival director Meninaputri Wismurti described as "happy activism." This subtle form of cultural activism stands in stark contrast to the political activism of the diverse local human rights and LGBT rights organizations. After the incidents in 2010, however, more voices inside and outside the Q!FF expressed their strong desire for the festival to take a more political stance.

In this chapter, I will analyze the cultural activist practices of the Q!FF and the way in which the FPI protests impacted the festival. The main questions addressed here are as follows: How did the festival reconcile its "happy activism" with the harsh political reality with which it was suddenly confronted? How did the 2010 protests influence the Q!FF's self-conception and its relationship to local LGBT rights organizations? And what role does the Q!FF play for the Indonesian LGBT community?

In the first section, I will offer background to the Q!FF and its mission. In the subsequent sections, I will explore some of the festival's defining features, including programming strategies, activism through film, and affective community formation. Before I delve deeper into the Q!FF universe, however, I wish to give a brief overview of the

[96] John Badalu had already taken the decision to retire from the festival before the protests in 2010.
[97] Despite his retirement, John Badalu has remained an important advisor to the festival committee, especially for the film programming.

history of queer film festivals, which is crucial for identifying the particularities of this unique Indonesian film festival. The Q!FF is part of a vibrant global cultural economy known as the international queer film festival circuit, comprising around 200 film festivals on six continents (Loist 2013a, 109).[98] Most festivals are globally connected through the exchange of industry contacts, movies, filmmakers, programmers, knowledge, and money, and sometimes through sheer solidarity. No matter how remote or marginalized a festival is—whether located in Paraguay, Serbia, or Indonesia—it is in one way or the other part of the complex transnational flows of films and people that constitute the globalized economical and cultural sphere of the festival network (de Valck & Loist 2011).

The emergence of queer film festivals can be traced back to the visibility politics of the women's and civil rights movements starting in the late 1960s, as well as to gay liberation politics shortly afterwards (Loist 2008, 2013a; Zielinski 2008, 2009). Around this time, rights activists and filmmakers alike were fighting against discrimination and social exclusion from the heteronormative mainstream society. Just as the Stonewall riot is seen as the birth of the gay liberation movement, the San Francisco International LGBT Film Festival marked the beginning of a global queer screen movement. Starting out as a community screening place in 1977, Frameline—as it is known today—is the world's oldest, largest, and longest-running queer film festival (Loist 2008, 2013a, 109f). Soon, more and more queer film festivals were established across North America. In the mid 1980s several festivals were founded in Europe, and in the late 1990s the phenomenon proliferated globally (Rhyne 2007, 4f; Zielinski 2008, 2009; Loist 2013a, 110; Rich 2013).

The reasons behind the foundation of these queer film festivals were manifold, but one main factor was the lack of representation, or alternatively the misrepresentation, of gays and lesbians in mainstream media and popular culture. The overwhelming success of the first queer film festival in San Francisco was evidence of the LGBT community's thirst for self-representation. The ever-growing groups of openly gay men and lesbian women increasingly took control over their images on screen. In order to counter the prevailing stereotypes and negative portrayals of homosexuality in Hollywood films, they created a strategy of positive imagery (see Loist 2008, 2012, 2013a; Zielinski 2008; Rich 2013). By applying this "corrective motif," they ultimately aimed for the full inclusion and acceptance

[98] For a comprehensive listing of international queer film festivals and their dates, see http://queerfilmfestivals.org/. Additionally, film festival scholar Skadi Loist (2013b) has created an interactive map that shows LGBT and queer film festivals existing globally since 1977. For the map, see http://goo.gl/maps/baqBi/

of alternative genders and sexualities into mainstream culture (Zielinski 2008, 129). Quickly, queer film festivals became a major platform for more realistic and, more importantly, positive representations of LGBT people and their lives.

In the early 1990s, the politics of positive images was challenged by the "New Queer Cinema" (Rich 1992), which explicitly experimented with negative and rebellious characters, "definitely rejecting any such project [positive images] and turning the system on its head" (Rich 2013, 28). Films like Tom Kalin's *Swoon* (1992), Gregg Araki's *The Living End* (1992), and Laurie Lynd's *R.S.V.P.* (1991) became art-house hits, proving that feature films of this kind could be commercially viable (Loist 2013a, 112; Rich 2013, 16-18). The relationship between the hitherto independent domain of queer cinema and the commercial film industry entered a period of rapid change, which was accompanied by significant market growth. In North America, the "ghetto went mainstream," to use Ruby Rich's (2013, 18) words. The birth of the pink dollar economy also led to the increasing professionalization and commercialization of queer film festivals (Loist 2013a, 112). The latter proliferated not only in North America and Europe but also in Asia, most notably in the east and increasingly in the southeast (Rhyne 2007, 4; Loist 2013a, 115f).

Having briefly outlined the emergence of queer film festivals, I will now move on to discuss the Q!FF and its film activism.

Introducing Asia's Largest Queer Film Festival

Each queer film festival operates differently and has its own ideas about identity and queer politics, LGBT rights, and the representation of gender and sexuality on screen. The many different festivals worldwide promote certain understandings of community, which usually connect to sociopolitical circumstances on the domestic level, or as Ger Zielinski (2008, 215) writes, "each festival has its own signature that intimates its own historically contingent formation." Ultimately, it is the work of the festival organizers that defines the conceptual framework of an event. In the case of the Q!FF, it was John Badalu who gave the festival its unique signature.

Background and Mission

John Badalu's love of film began in early childhood. Every day after school he would go to watch a movie at a cinema close to his parents' house in Makassar (Sulawesi). After graduating from senior high school in Malang (East Java), John moved to Jakarta to attend

university. Since 1995 he has been working in various media fields, including advertising, music, and performing arts. John gained his first experience in the film festival world in 2000, when he started working for the British and Italian Film Festival and volunteered for the newly established Jakarta International Film Festival. A year or so later John quit his festival jobs and started freelancing as a journalist, writing film reviews for newspapers and magazines. Still intrigued by his brief insight into the festival business, John hit on the idea of starting his very own film festival. At various press screenings for new Indonesian film releases he discussed his vision with fellow journalists from similar backgrounds. It did not take long to convince them of the viability of his plan. Soon after, the group of seven journalists founded Q-munity, an organization that would serve as the backbone for the film festival. In 2002, the Q!FF was born.

In the beginning, Q-munity did not really know how to organize a film festival. All they could count on was the connections to diverse foreign cultural institutions they had established through former work relationships. Since John Badalu was the only Q-munity member who had some sort of film festival experience, he took on the direction of the Q!FF. In the years that followed, John significantly shaped the festival's agenda and character. The very first festival took place with no budget whatsoever. The Goethe Institute and local alternative arts spaces like ruangrupa and Theatre Utan Kayu let Q-munity use their facilities for free. Similarly, Q-munity also received the films on a goodwill basis. After searching on the Internet for interesting LGBT-themed films, John Badalu contacted the directors to ask for screening permissions. Many, but not all, of the filmmakers agreed to let their work be screened without screening fees. Other films were sponsored by foreign cultural centers. Furthermore, John and his colleagues decided to show films that they already had in their private collections. In these cases, they did not bother to ask the directors or distributors for their permission. After all, they thought, this was only a small underground event that nobody but a handful of people, mainly friends of the organizers, would know anything about. But things turned out very differently. Contrary to expectations, most of the festival audience comprised straight film-and-arts people, who turned up in respectable numbers. John was surprised to learn that most local LGBT people were too scared to attend the festival. This reluctance changed over time, however.

Today, the Q!FF is the largest and most widely attended film festival in Indonesia. In 2002, just twenty-one films were shown to an audience totaling 750 visitors. By 2005,

the numbers had risen to 100 films and 4,500 visitors (including events in Yogyakarta and Bali). The 2008 festival was the most successful to date, with a visitor count of 10,500 (including Yogyakarta, Bali, Surabaya, and Bandung).[99] In total, about 800 films have been screened since the festival's inception, reaching an estimated audience of over 160,000 people (see Q!FF booklet 2012).

Initially, the Q!FF did not have a political agenda. The aim of the festival was rather to make a cultural contribution to Indonesian society by introducing *high-quality films* that offered an *alternative* to Hollywood movies, the only films available in Indonesian theaters at that time. Although most of the films shown at the Q!FF to date have dealt with issues of gender, sexuality, and HIV/AIDS, the festival was always envisioned primarily as an arts event and not as a political endeavor. In fact, it was only because all of the Q-munity members happened to be gay that they decided to make their festival a queer film festival. This struck them as an obvious decision, since they wanted to screen films that they could connect with personally. Besides, they were eager to introduce something new. Doubtless to say, at that time nobody in Indonesia had ever seen a festival like this before.

Being journalists, the Q-munity members were well aware of the existence of queer film festivals elsewhere in the world, but in an interview John Badalu (2011) clearly stresses that none of them served as a blueprint for the Q!FF:

> We didn't even look at the other queer film festivals as a model. Like the American ones, we find they are too commercial. They charge tickets, we don't and we are not in commercial cinemas either. And we cannot afford to invite directors. So we are very small, we are very indie. We are just like: We have a space, we do it there.

To this day, the festival has kept its spirit of experimentation, and it continues to be organized in a highly DIY manner without any fixed rules about how it should operate. This leaves room for fresh ideas and gives new team members the chance to get involved.

Like many queer film festivals elsewhere, the Q!FF works under precarious conditions (see Loist 2011), with its organizers never knowing if they have enough funds for the next year. The festival receives no governmental support and is largely financed by means of private donations and foreign institutional funding from organizations like HiVOS (until 2011) in the Netherlands and the Australian AusAID (until 2012). Due to the scarcity of financial resources, the event's operational costs are kept to a minimum. All screening venues continue to be provided free of charge and the programmers still ask

[99] The large numbers reflect recent efforts (since 2004) to extend the festival's reach beyond Jakarta to other cities.

filmmakers and distributors for permission to screen their movies without screening fees as a show of solidarity.

Since the Q!FF is a non-profit and volunteer-based organization, human resources also pose a tremendous challenge, as John Badalu states in an interview: "The bigger the festival gets, the more time it requires from all the team members. And because no one is getting paid and their paid jobs are also important, we experienced a high turnover of people entering and leaving the organization" (Badalu 2008). The high turnover makes the organizational structure of the Q!FF very unstable, or rather "liquid," as new festival director Meninaputri Wismurti described it. Today, the management of the festival effectively rests on the shoulders of four (unpaid) people, with volunteers coming and going every year.

Naming the Festival

In the name Q! Film Festival, the letter "Q" stands primarily for "queer," but the organizers purposively decided against writing out the term in full. In an interview, John Badalu (2011) explains this decision as follows: "If we say queer nobody can spell it or even pronounce it well. And we said, well then maybe just 'Q' and 'Q' can be anything. We just stick to it and don't even bother to explain what it means." Yet the choice of the letter "Q" was also motivated by security concerns. If the organizers had included the words "gay" and "lesbian" in the festival's title, as they initially proposed, there was a chance that the name would be considered too "in your face," leading people to shy away from attending the event. The use of these more common terms might also be risky, attracting unwanted attention from unsympathetic religious groups. Indonesian LGBT rights activist Dédé Oetomo further suggests that the English term "queer" is a more neutral and less threatening way of expressing identity. In this sense, the word "queer" appears as a kind of *kromo inggil* (High Javanese) that is more euphemistic than "gay" and "lesbian," because it comes without the negative connotations more commonly attached to the latter terms (Oetomo, cited in Maimunah 2008a; see also Davies 2010, 14). Clearly, the advantage of the "Q signifying queer" lies in the fact that the term is not widely known in Indonesia. Thus, the usage of "queer," or "Q," gave the organizers greater freedom and helped to make the festival a more all-encompassing event.

At the time of choosing the name for the festival, the Q!FF founders were very much aware of the original meaning of the term "queer" and its role in the HIV/AIDS and

LGBT rights movement in the United States. This was not of primary concern to them, however. The usage of queer was not politically or theoretically motivated; it was neither a critique of lesbian and gay identity politics nor a self-conscious deconstruction of a fictitious homogeneous LGBT community (see Jagose 1996). As mentioned in the introduction, the term "queer" as used by the Q!FF is an emic concept. The emic "queer" is a much more neutral term than its original North American political connotations would suggest. This is not to say, however, that in Indonesia the term "queer" has no critical potential. For Q-munity, "queer" is a handy descriptive term that neatly defines the festival's agenda of all-inclusiveness. This all-inclusiveness is also reflected in the names of the diverse festival sections, which include "Q!Gossip" and "Q!Lit," and in organizational terms like "Q!-mittee." Over time, the term "queer" has become closely associated with the Q!FF in Indonesia, so much so that its usage is widely seen as being specific to the festival. In order to underscore the word's particular dynamics and unique connection to the Q!FF, from now on I will italicize *Q!ueer* to keep it distinct from the English term "queer."[100] In the same way, I will use terms such as "*Q!ueer* community" and "*Q!ueer* spectators" in relation to the festival.

The festival's creative appropriation of the Western term "queer" reflects Tom Boellstorff's (2003) theory of "dubbing culture," which explains how foreign concepts that get transferred into new settings develop different meanings over time. In his article *Dubbing Culture: Indonesian Gay and Lesbi Subjectivities and Ethnography in an Already Globalized World*, he explores how the English terms "gay" and "lesbian" entered Indonesia through the media and how they have subsequently been reworked in this new context. Although people in Indonesia's LGBT community use the terms "gay" and "lesbian" to refer to their own subject positions in ways that are similar to uses in English-speaking contexts, the meaning of these concepts is never the same in different cultural settings. As Boellstorff (2003, 226) further explains, "To 'dub' a discourse is neither to parrot it verbatim nor to compose an entirely new script. It is to hold together cultural logics without resolving them into a unitary whole."

The term "dubbing" originates from the film industry and refers to the process of substituting the original dialogue in a film with a foreign translation thereof. As Boellstorff notes, a dubbed movie always feels a bit fake, because the moving lips and the spoken

[100] See Boellstorff (2005, 2007) for italicizing *gay* and *lesbi* in order to emphasize that these terms are localized versions of the Western concepts.

words never really match; they are asynchronous. A similar dissonance can be observed with the introduction of the term "queer" into the Indonesian context. Most of the festival's organizers, volunteers, and spectators don't know what queer really means and where the term originally comes from. When I asked the new festival directors about their understandings of queer and where they first heard the term, Hally answered that he came across the word only at the Q!FF itself, since it is a "*queer* film festival." He did not seem to know much about the background of the word, but he suggested I ask Meninaputri, whom he felt would be better placed to answer my question. Indeed, she claimed to have known about the term "queer" when she was a teenager, having first come across it while reading *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde during her youth (part of which was spent in France). In an interview, she recalls this episode as follows:

> I still remember the moment very well, because I met my first gay friend when I was fourteen years old and then we were reading this book. We thought queer refers to someone who is different. We never related queer with gay or something like that. We said, yeah, yeah, yeah we are different so we are queer. Actually, my first interpretation of queer is someone who is different and very unique, but that they have a hard time to be accepted. And then I also connected this notion to all the kids that have been bullied in our school. I don't know if they were gay or lesbian or not, but still they have been bullied because they did not have the same hairstyle as others for example and that's why they were excluded.

At first, Meninaputri used "queer" in its historical signification, which stems from its use in nineteenth-century English literature, where it generally meant "strange," "odd," "unusual," or "eccentric" and had no association with sexual deviance or homosexuality. It was only after joining the Q!FF and watching diverse films that explained the linguistic appropriation of the term by US queer activists in the 1990s that she understood its political dimension for people of alternative genders and sexualities. In her view, however, heterosexual people like herself can also be "queer." She argues that membership of the "*Q!ueer* family" is equally open to "*Q!ueer* heterosexuals," because they are allies in the fight against heteronormativity, a regime that oppresses not only LGBT people but also people who do not conform to the norm as determined by mainstream society. Being critical *Q!ueer* means for Meninaputri the disruption of heteronormativity and the destabilization of hegemonic masculinity. It is the resistance to the "normal" that unifies homosexuals and heterosexuals and holds the promise for powerful subversive alliances.

Meninaputri is representative of a young generation of self-determined Indonesian middle-class women who do not want to comply with the *kodrat wanita*, which limits women's roles to being a good mother and housewife. But not everybody working at the

Q!FF shares this broader understanding of *Q!ueer* as anything outside the norm. Some of the volunteers, for example, do not include heterosexual people under the *Q!ueer* umbrella. This shows how flexibly and dynamically the term is handled at the Q!FF. The open understanding of *Q!ueerness* is also reflected in the festival's programming.

Q! Programming Strategies

Film festivals are distinguished from one another by their style of programming. One important field of study, especially regarding identity-based film festivals, is the relationship between programming and identity politics (see de Valck & Loist 2011). In this section, I will explore the particular programming strategies of the Q!FF and the decision-making processes behind these.

The factors that may affect programming decisions are manifold, but unlike with most queer film festivals elsewhere, the Q!FF programmers do not base their film selection primarily on how explicitly gay, lesbian, or transgender the themes or characters of a movie are, or on whether it is made by a queer filmmaker and/or for the queer community. In fact, the Q!FF programmers do not engage in discussions about what movies are "queer enough" to be considered for the program. They rather ask which movies are relevant for the all-inclusive *Q!ueer* agenda the festival envisions. As John further explaines, "Basically, we're looking for good films, it doesn't matter if queer is the main topic or not. Even if it's just a side issue, it's okay. If it's good, we show it" (Badalu, interviewed by Fui 2012, 81). With this strategy, the Q!FF can be seen as one of a small number of queer film festivals that realize an all-inclusive and diverse program, thereby challenging the largely essentialist and separatist programming practices of most other queer film festivals (see Loist 2008, 165, 2009, 22).[101]

One thing that the Q!FF has in common with other festivals, however, is the existence of a screening panel that selects movies for the festival program. The Q!FF programming team consists of the head of programming and five screening members, including former director John Badalu, new director Meninaputri Wismurti, and a film traffic coordinator. But the selection committee is not a closed group of long-term Q!FF members. Instead, it is a fluid assembly that is open to volunteers, many of whom are former festival visitors who wish to get more involved in the organization of the event. In

[101] Among these exceptions is the MIX NYC festival for experimental queer films, which has successfully incorporated radical queer politics into their programming strategy.

this sense, the Q!FF operates along the same lines as most queer film festivals, which aim at directly including the community in order to represent a wide spectrum of its members in the film program (Zielinski 2009, 982; Loist 2012, 163).

The Q!FF programmers try to balance their film selection in terms of genre and content. The more political and weighty films are counterbalanced with lighter, more commercial movies. Although gay-themed movies are by far predominant in the queer film market, the Q!FF always tries showing films that depict a wide variety of lifestyles existing under the *Q!ueer* umbrella. This is key to the Q!FF, as John Badalu (2008) further explains:

> We try to balance everything in the programming. We would like to have a range of many kinds of films: Some fiction films, some documentaries, some short films, animations, and experimental films. Everything. We screen everything from classical films to the most recent ones. We try to showcase a lot of Asian films and supporting Indonesian films is our main strength. We do try to find a theme each year. But basically, we will prioritize films that bear more relation to the situations in Indonesia.

As part of the Q!FF's approach to ensuring diversity in its program, the team excludes most North American queer films. This reflects reluctance on the programmers' part to show movies that have already been screened at almost every other international queer film festival. Thus, the Q!FF remains true to its initial aim of screening alternative films first and foremost and thereby counteracting the prevalence of Hollywood features in commercial Indonesian movie theaters. In the view of the Q!FF, *alternative* critical programming is characterized by strategic regional choices that only marginally include US American movies and instead turn the spotlight on often overlooked regions like Asia.

It seems almost imperative for an Asian queer film festival to focus on its own region, but this is by no means common practice. To the contrary, many Asian queer film festivals take white, mainly gay culture to be "natural," "desirable," and "progressive" and thereby marginalize further the already suppressed local LGBT communities (Ching 2006, 606). Film critic and curator Yau Ching (2006) criticizes the tendency of Asian queer film festivals, like the Hong Kong International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival (HKLGFF), to screen mainly "white-muscle-boy" movies, which the organizers assume are the only films audiences would pay for. He further notes (ibid., 606),

> Many LGTBQ film/video festivals in Asia suffer from the triple burdens produced by the globalization of Euro-American white gay culture, the colonial histories of our own social contexts, and the chauvinism embedded in our queer communities, all of which unfortunately reinforce each other.

As a consequence, the HKLGFF has become an exclusive event that, according to Tang (2009, 16), is a "cultural product for consumption at the upper-middle-class level."

Taking a very different path to this mainstream and commercialized approach, the Q!FF tries to screen as many local and regional productions as possible. Because of the lack of corporate sponsorship and the Q!FF's non-reliance on ticket revenue, the programmers can select movies that matter to them. Hence, it is not economic success that determines the organizer's film selection, but rather their sense of quality. The prioritization of local and regional LGBT-themed movies has many positive side effects. On the one hand, it strengthens the regional production and distribution network for Asian queer films. On the other hand, it involves the local community and meets the audience demand for movies that deal with issues relevant to their own experiences.

From the start, the Q!FF programmers have sought to identify Indonesian films dealing with issues related to alternative genders and sexualities to show at the festival. At first, the organizers doubted whether they would find any, but to their surprise they discovered three short films in the first festival year. John Badalu recounted that all three shorts were made by straight directors and therefore resulted in rather stereotypical representations. But at least, he added, it was a start. As the years have gone by, the programmers have invested greater effort in searching more actively for relevant Indonesian productions. Soon, they have discovered enough LGBT-themed films to compile short programs. When the 2003 box office hit *Arisan!* was released, the Q!FF was among the first festivals to screen it. Today, the Q!FF is one of the main reference points for international programmers who are looking for Asian queer films. In fact, the Q!FF organizers are often approached to curate programs for festivals around the world.

Q!FF's Indonesian program expanded further when John Badalu made the decision to show more films whose subject matters lay beyond LGBT issues. As he notes, "When we started the human rights section in 2007 this was a great opportunity for many Indonesian films, because they [local filmmakers] don't make a lot of queer films, but they make some more films about human rights" (Badalu 2011). For John, LGBT people are not the only marginalized group in Indonesian society, and he therefore sought to extend the festival remit to include other social issues faced by women, disabled people, and religious minority groups, among others. In 2008, for instance, the festival featured Indonesian documentary filmmaker Ucu Agustin in the "Focus on Director" section. Her films tackle a wide range of women's and human rights issues. For example, her short film

Kartini Bernyawa 9 (9 Lives of a Woman, 2007) tells the story of a group of Indonesian women infected with HIV/AIDS, while *Kematian di Jakarta* (Death in Jakarta, 2006) looks at how the dead bodies of homeless and undocumented (*tunawan*) people are treated by the authorities. By including films of this sort, the festival has become a real hub for the local film community. It is a place where directors, producers, and actors meet, enter into direct dialogue with the audience, and exchange experiences with international festival guests.

The increased showcasing of Indonesian cinema at the Q!FF had another, very different positive effect: it not only attracted a more diverse audience in terms of gender,[102] but it also challenged the class bias that has frequently been identified as a major problem by both inside and outside observers. All international movies are shown either in English or with English subtitles and therefore cater mainly to middle-class and upper-middle-class audiences between the ages of 18 and 35, chiefly comprising activists, film students, academics, and people with a general interest in arts and culture. Most people of the lower classes do not speak or understand English, and since the festival has no resources to make Indonesian subtitles itself, less educated Indonesians are automatically excluded. But with the growing number of Indonesian movies in the overall program, more and more spectators from across social classes have attended the festival.

Undoubtedly, the thematic opening is indicative of the festival's aim of providing an inclusive alternative space for Indonesian cinema. In fact, it is the programming of alternative films, in particular, that makes the Q!FF attractive to many film lovers, independent of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In an interview with Chris Chong Chan Fui (2012, 84), John Badalu emphasizes the importance of providing new viewpoints:

> I want them [the audience] to see the festival as an exhibitor of films that are an alternative to Hollywood (movies). When they come to see alternative films, then they can ask further questions about what "queer" means. The first goal is to show that there are alternative films … If they want to know more, they can read the catalogue. Coming to see the film and then reading that there is an alternative viewpoint is important.

Indeed, once they become curious, many spectators decide to also watch some of the queer films. However, shifting the focus beyond "one-dimensional target groups" (Loist 2012, 165) gives the Q!FF organizers a greater responsibility to educate their audiences. Since it has to be assumed that the overall audience is heterosexual and male, the reception context

[102] The organizers have noted an increased number of female audience members in the last couple of years, including many with headscarves (*jilbabs*).

does not automatically allow for queer readings. Therefore, the contextualization of queer films is of utmost importance.

Generally speaking, the Q!-programmers like to screen movies whose content is different from the negative images of LGBT people represented in the national mainstream media, showing the bright and happy side of their lives. Nevertheless, the festival does occasionally include one or two exceptions in the form of films that showcase negative or even homophobic portrayals of LGBT people in order to start a discussion with the audience and thereby build awareness. Discussion forums and talks with filmmakers provide a framework for reinterpreting the content of the films, and, together with information about the movies in the festival catalogue, generate a meta-discourse on the entire program (see Searle 1996, 85). Through the combination of watching movies and interacting within the *Q!ueer* space of the festival, the audience participates in the creation of new ways of seeing on different levels. As Marc Siegel (1997, 136) explains, "The identity that one affirms upon entering the festival can thus become redefined to include not merely a different relation to race, gender, or sexuality, but to cinema as well." In this sense, one might concur with Fung (1999) that by programming films one is always also "programming the public."

What is more, in order to historicize the cinematic representation of LGBT people in Indonesian cinema, the Q!FF has included retrospectives of New Order films that deal with alternative genders and sexualities. The latter include titles such as *Titian Serambut Dibelah Tujuh* (The Narrow Bridge, 1982) by Chaerul Umam and *Istana Kecantikan* (Palace of Beauty, 1988) by Wahyu Sihombing (Maimunah 2008a). Additionally, the organizers have programmed international queer film classics that cannot be seen elsewhere, such as *Caravaggio* (1986) and *Edward II* (1991) by Derek Jarman and *Johan* (1976) by Philippe Vallois.

As part of their all-encompassing, education-oriented agenda, the Q!FF has recently expanded its focus from film screenings alone to a diverse range of events, including art exhibitions (Q! Exhibition), book launches, and readings (Q! Lit). In addition, Q!FF also offers free HIV/AIDS tests on the site. One of the most popular events is "Q! Gossip," a section comprising discussions about different issues concerning gender and sexuality. Recent topics have included "Homosexuality and Religion" (Q!FF Booklet 2008), "Queering the Movement" (Q!FF Booklet 2009), "Let's talk about sex 101" (Q!FF Booklet

2010), and "Waria Warrior" (Q!FF Booklet 2012), a session that dealt with female-to-male transgender persons and their gender struggles.

It is not only the politics of programming but also, in similar way I would argue, the politics of place that influences audiences. In recent years, the Q!FF has particularly aimed to attract more young people and has started to become more mainstream in terms of festival venues. Besides the classical arts venues and cultural centers, the festival now also holds screenings in the hip cafés of Jakarta. According to the festival organizers, middle-class youngsters prefer to watch films in cafés and don't like to go to the cultural centers, because they associate them with fustiness and elitism rather than coolness.

The significance of the politics of place became very apparent to me during my first Q!FF visit in 2008. That year, for the first time, the festival had enough funding to hold some screenings at Blitzmegaplex, the largest cinema chain in Indonesia, in the Grand Indonesia Shopping Mall.[103] Although most of the movies programmed were documentaries, the theaters were crowded with young spectators almost every night. This really surprised me, because I was very aware of the generally marginalized status of documentaries worldwide. I asked the Q!FF team how it was that Indonesia seemed to be an exception to this trend. As it was explained to me, the main reason was the screening location: the shopping mall. For many mainstream youngsters, the malls are the main hangouts. And since they are generally familiar with such places, it is no great leap for them to attend the festival in the first place. As a consequence, and contrary to the more commercialized international queer film festivals, the Q!FF puts the less appealing movies in the big public cinemas and the more popular fiction films in the cultural centers. So, if the "typical mall audience" wants to watch the feature films and meet the filmmakers they are forced to go to the less popular cultural centers.

The Q!FF's particular programming strategy is designed to bring together the different audiences of commercial and cultural venues and to familiarize the young generation with the cultural centers. In this way, the festival gently compels its visitors to see and experience something new and different. Thus, in the case of the Q!FF, it is not the size of the anticipated audience (or anticipated ticket sales) that directs the programming and determines the screening location, as Ger Zielinksi (2008, 236) has observed for North

[103] Because of the implementation of the Pornography Law in 2009, Blitzmegaplex refused to make its facilities available to the Q!FF in subsequent years.

American queer film festivals, but instead the choice of screening venues that directs the anticipated audience.

Community Formation in an Underground *Q!ueer* Space

Samantha Searle (1996, 79) has described queer film festivals as sites of social experience, sites of consumption, and sites of reflection about queer politics. Through the creation of alternative spaces for non-normative genders and sexualities, queer film festivals facilitate the formation of communities that not only allow for "subcultural affirmation and pride" but also determine the politics and economics of a global "queer screen culture" (ibid., 80; Loist 2013a). Ruby Rich (2013, 37) compares queer film festivals to traditional populist gathering spaces such as the circus, the carnival, the courtroom, or sporting events. In her attempt to make sense of self-celebratory and affirmative rituals within the queer film festival realm, she ruminates on the possible functions of such processes:

> Perhaps they are indeed festivals, in the oldest sense of the word, and serve an important function in terms of instilling faith and inspiring agency. Perhaps attendance at these festivals should be viewed as a form of pilgrimage for the faithful. … This shared communion has its effects: it reinforces the faith of the faithful, assures supplicants of their worthiness, creates a bond to carry into the larger world, and puts audiences back in touch with shared experiences and values.

The notion that queer film festivals serve as populist gathering spaces that create local communities is also borne out by the Q!FF. But there is one key difference between the Q!FF and most North American and Western European queer film festivals, namely the former's underground status. In this sense, it is more akin to Chinese queer film festivals, which Bao (2010, 201) describes as "fleeting, transient, contingent and somewhat furtive." After the FPI protests in 2010, the Q!FF became more underground than ever before. As an event, it is now virtually off the map, or "below the radar" (*di bawah radar*), to use a phrase often used by Lulu Ratna (2005) to describe Indonesian film festivals that are not easily detectible (see also van Heeren 2012, 75). If you are not informed about the festival dates and locations via social media or word of mouth then you are excluded from this "secretive private party," as Intan Paramaditha called the Q!FF at a conference I attended in New York City in September 2013.[104]

[104] "Religion in the Digital Age II: Mediating 'The Human' in a Globalizing Asia," organized by the Center for Religion and Media (NYU), co-sponsored by the Asian Film and Media Initiative (AFMI) and Cinema Studies NYU Tisch.

It is precisely the Q!FF's furtive and underground status that complicates the notion of queer film festivals as counterpublic spheres, a quality that has been discussed at length by many film festival scholars (Rich 1993; White 1999; Perspex 2006; Kim 2007, Ommert & Loist 2008). Jürgen Habermas's (1962) concept of the public sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*) and Nancy Fraser's (1990) and Michael Warner's (2002) concept of counterpublics do not apply to the Q!FF due to the festival's strategic underground enclaving. The Q!FF does not exist in the realm of the *Öffentlichkeit*. It is effectively invisible to the non-initiated general public.

Although underground, the Q!FF is nevertheless a "site of social experience" (Searle 1996, 79) and in this sense also a place of pilgrimage (Rich 2013, 37). Primarily, it functions as a home for the *Q!ueer* community. The Q!FF constitutes a *Q!ueer* space where people can watch films together and hang out with sympathetic peers. The festival's independent spirit and informal organization make it very easy to catch up with old friends and/or meet new people. Visitors, filmmakers, the Q!FF organizers, and volunteers intermix actively and welcome everybody who is open-minded and supportive of the festival's cause. Being at the Q!FF often feels like being at a family gathering. As one Q!FF organizer confirmed, "It's like sometimes meeting a family that you don't meet for a long time; it's like you go back to your family when it's Christmas time." Meninaputri described the concept of "community as family" and the experience of being at the festival in even more affective terms: "From year to year it's like a group hug."

Indeed, watching films is really of secondary importance. For many local LGBT people, the Q!FF serves as a casual hangout (*tempat ngeber*)[105] and no less as a dating platform—a place to find romance or sexual partners. After all, LGBT Indonesians seldom have the opportunity to meet so many like-minded people at once, as John Badalu (2008) notes: "It is an event where queer people can mingle and learn more about their own being and socialize with the others. It is another social event, outside the bars and cruising spots. It is one of its kind." The festival is an alternative meeting place outside the Internet chat rooms, the main hook-up places for Indonesian gay guys and, to a much lesser extent, women-who-love-women. Certainly, the Q!FF is a "site of belonging" (Boellstorff 2005), where one can meet people who are the same (*sama*). In this sense, the Q!FF is also an space of empowerment where LGBT people can actualize themselves.

[105] In Bahasa Indonesia, *tempat* means place and *ngeber* is a gay language (*bahasa binan*) term for hangout (Boellstorff 2005, 126).

Like most of the lesbian and gay *tempat ngebers* in Jakarta, the Q!FF is a tactical space. Boellstorff (2005, 145) follows de Certeau's (1984) definition of tactic when he describes the tactical ways in which public spheres in Indonesia are transformed into gay and lesbian spaces by "forging rooms of one's own in the space of another." The public spaces of mainstream society are generally heteronormative manifestations. Once a year, though, the Q!FF re-appropriates hitherto "straight spaces," like movie theaters, cultural centers, cafés, and galleries, and temporarily turns them into *Q!ueer* spaces. Generally, these locations are not typical lesbian or gay hangouts, but they become *Q!ueer* spaces in the context of the Q!FF. When the film festival comes to an end, these temporary *Q!ueer* spaces transform back into locations of the heteronormative world.

Q!ueer spaces are considered "open" (*terbuka*) sites where likewise "opened" LGBT people tend to go (see also Boellstorff 2005, 132). This does not mean, however, that "closed" (*tertutup*) people do not visit the festival. As one of the organizers commented, "They don't need to watch the film but at least for them to come it's already a step forward; they have the courage to come, that's already something." Another organizer added,

> I have seen many audiences come to me saying, "This is really good, it's really opening my eyes. I am not alone anymore." This kind of stuff we are achieving. Just to let them know it's okay to be you. You don't have to be political or whatever, but you have to accept who you are. That is a simple goal and a really big reward actually.

By showing up at the event, the closeted visitors are slowly initiated into this new world. After a while, many start opening themselves up to like-minded people, or as Boellstorff (2005, 133) puts it, "subject positions become instantiated as subjectivities." The festival is also one of the rare places in Jakarta where LGBT people mix (*campur*) in one location. Indonesian gays and lesbians are generally separated into *dunia gay* (gay world) and *dunia lesbi* (lesbian world), reflecting the common gender segregation in Indonesia (Boellstorff 2005).

Despite the unusual gender mixing at the Q!FF, gays clearly outnumber the lesbian visitors. On my first visit to the festival, I found myself wondering where all the lesbian audience members were hiding. One day, I went to a surprise screening (from the section titled "Cilubka!") of what was promised by the festival organizers to be a lesbian movie. I arrived on time and entered the small screening theater of TIM XXI at the Taman Ismail Marzuki (TIM), an art and cultural center in Jakarta. To my surprise, however, there were only four other people in the theater. I knew that the movie was promoted to different

lesbian communities through mobile text messages and networks of organizations, such as Ardhanary Institute and Institut Pelangi Perempuan, so I had expected the theater to be relatively busy. About ten minutes into the film, however, I heard the door open and saw a group of ten or twelve women sneak in. At first, I reasoned that they must have got stuck (*macet*) in Jakarta's infamous traffic, and I gave the matter no further thought. Only when the same group left the theater before the credits had started rolling did the truth of the situation begin to dawn on me: the women did not want to be seen and recognized and therefore entered and left under the cover of darkness. The Q!FF, widely known as an open space, is apparently too public for many women-who-love-women, who would rather gather in private, less conspicuous spaces.

For the people who can afford to be seen, the Q!FF offers a safe space where people can freely express themselves and be what they are without being judged, as the festival team emphasizes in its brochure: "It is a festival where you put your heart first, your spirit the second and then store your dogma in the locker room for a while." The feeling of togetherness and being inspired through encounters with people who are like oneself, and the positive emotions this brings about, is what makes queer film festivals stand out as affective community spaces (see Bao 2010, 199). It is through emotions that people (bodily spaces) are aligned with communities (social spaces), as Sarah Ahmed (2004a) suggests. The emotional and affective encounters taking place at the Q!FF are the ground for the formation of a *Q!ueer* community, where "attachment takes place through movement, through being moved by the proximity of others" (ibid., 11). And it is the great achievement of the Q!FF that, because of its all-inclusive approach, a sense of community is afforded not only to LGBT people but to everybody who is sympathetic to *alternative* lifestyles.

So far this chapter has focused on the Q!FF's defining features, such as the programming of *alternative* films and the formation of a *Q!ueer* community. In the last section, I will look at the transition from this rather subtle form of engagement to a more political one that emerged as a consequence of the FPI protests in 2010.

Q!FF goes Political

> After 10 years of existing, Q! Film Festival has learnt to live a little bit smarter than before. We have learnt and paid the high prize to recognize our true friends, to defend our rights to live as humans, to fight for what we believe in the most: love, compassion and humanity … For us, it is also the year to start from ground zero. 10 years have passed, thousands of films have been screened, thousands of audiences have attended the screenings yearly,

> people come and go, including the uninvited ones. Then what? You cannot just stop at one point, because some people are pointing fingers at your face, throwing dog-poo at you, following you home at night and making scary phone calls. But what you need to ask for yourself is whether you still have the desire to continue and live? And keep the spirit alive? Do you want to be beaten by the politics of fear? Or fight for the faith you have in humanity? To answer all these questions, we give you more than 125 new films to be watched at Q! Film Festival 2012. We still naively believe that film is still the perfect medium to convey a message of universal love to the initiators, creators, and certainly to the audience. Based on that religion, we believe that the movies you are going to enjoy for the next 9 days are guaranteed to touch your heart and soul in non-patronizing ways … For the eleventh time, we welcome you to the Q! Film Festival 2012. It is a place where you can get a free hug, because once in a while all you need to have is warm, friendly, sincere bear-hugs without prejudice. Just love.

I have cited this introduction from the 2012 festival brochure almost in its entirety because it neatly captures the Q!FF's ethos of love and happiness. At the same time, the text demonstrates how the festival now takes a more political stance. The carefreeness with which the Q!FF started out changed to a more allert attitude following the FPI protests in 2010, with the organizers claiming to have "learnt to live a little bit smarter than before." As a consequence, many people involved in the Q!FF rethought their engagement in light of the trade-off between personal risks and political responsibilities. The sudden public exposure was of great concern to all those involved, especially those volunteers who were not yet outted, and led some of them to relinquish their positions at the festival.

Another result of this shift in consciousness was the implementation of new safety procedures. For instance, now the festival's website is only accessible to members. In order to access the site and browse the festival's schedule, visitors have to reveal their identities and register their names, provide their email addresses, and check the terms of agreement. Another safety measure is the cessation of widespread advertisement, with posters and banners no longer publicly displayed at the venues. Additionally, the Q!FF team now refrains from printing their full names and pictures in the festival brochure. A key development in the Q!FF teams' understanding of the role of politics was their participation in security training designed to prepare them in case of new violent protests. As a result of this training, they developed guidelines and strategies on how best to handle the media and how to react in dangerous situations. According to these guidelines, national newspapers and TV stations are to be avoided and only LGBT-friendly magazines and film journals should be approached for advertising the event. Besides these more traditional media, the festival started to make greater use of social media like Twitter, Facebook, and BBM (Blackberry messenger) to promote and disseminate information about the event.

Thus, the festival's media presence is now largely limited to peer-to-peer promotion and relies heavily on personal networks that guarantee safe ground.

The 2010 protests also led the Q!FF organizers' to realize that greater collaboration with different local LGBT and human rights organizations would make it much more powerful. The necessity for coalition building, a recent development born in reaction to the violent attacks on the ILGA Asia conference in Surabaya a few month earlier, became even more apparent when the Q!FF itself was subjected to homophobic attacks. This new political consciousness on the part of the Q!FF proved hugely popular among the local LGBT rights organizations. The Jakarta-based organization Arus Pelangi, for example, stated that it very much supports the Q!FF's decision to engage in greater political outreach. In Arus Pelangi's view, it should be a general aim of the numerous different groups to work together more closely. Ultimately, as the organization further argued, all minorities have a common goal of greater social inclusion. Saskia Wieringa (2013) describes the advantages of such "rainbow coalitions" as follows:

> Thinking about feminist and sexual politics on the basis of affinity opens the ground for the building of rainbow coalitions, built on shifting political practices. According to the political project at hand a coalition is built around that project, of people and organizations who from whatever position they stand on, agree to collaborate. Thus the web of solidarity is cast much wider: one doesn't have to "be" a transgender, or a lesbian, or a member of a minority ethnicity or religion, to fight for that cause.

The idea of affinity-based coalitions goes beyond traditional identity politics and functions instead on the grounds of "political kinship" (Haraway 1991, 156). In a similar vein, Niral Yuval-Davis (1994, 188f) writes that "coalitions are formed not in terms of 'who' we are but in terms of what we want to achieve." In the context of LGBT rights, solidarity is no longer constrained by a common mode of oppression based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Rather, solidarity is predicated on the possession of a common enemy, such as heteronormativity (see also Wieringa 2013). In the same way, it is possible to fight for a common goal, like equality for all. Having said this, one cannot ignore the fact that the different claims for rights and recognition of the various minority groups in Indonesia are not implicitly compatible, which may make a joint fight inherently difficult.

One example of the Q!FF's politicization is the festival's closer collaboration with the Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS, Komisi untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan). KontraS and Q!FF started working together in 2009, two years after the festival introduced the Human Rights section. Together, they organized a series of films dealing with human rights issues, such as child abuse,

corruption, and religious radicalization in Indonesia. After 2010, both organizations wanted to do more. In 2011, the Q!FF organized a screening event as part of the annual "Human Rights School" held by KontraS. Every year about thirty students from all over the archipelago, including Aceh and Papua, come together in Jakarta for three weeks in the summer holidays to learn about human rights conventions, receive advocacy training, and acquire the tools necessary to undertake human rights investigations. As Papang Hidayat (2011) from KontraS explains,

> They have to practice human rights. They have to live in a nasty neighborhood in Jakarta, live in the center of garbage processors, live with traditional fisherman in North Jakarta. We send them there for fieldwork and they have to live with someone they maybe don't like.

In previous years, KontraS had only dealt with LGBT rights questions as part of a general discussion panel on human rights issues, in which the panelists had only fifteen to thirty minutes to present their work. This set-up was criticized by many people, who argued that if KontraS wanted to "really advocate human rights values" then they had to "reach to the highest limits: freedom of religion and LGBT rights" (Hidayat 2011). Both of these issues challenge the limits of tolerance within Indonesian society and are thus highly susceptible to human rights violations. A survey conducted by the Indonesian Survey Circle (LSI) reveals that LGBT people face a greater degree of intolerance and hostility than any other section of the population (see Aritonang 2012; Prakoso 2012). Yet, despite the fact that people with non-normative sexual subject positions face the greatest intolerance, human rights activists are reluctant to provide support on this front, as Papang explicates further:

> The majority of human rights activists in Indonesia do not want to address LGBT issues. They prefer to address other, softer issues, because they still consider LGBT issues as too sensitive. It has something to do with the perception of the public. They need some kind of support from the larger society and they think if they talk about LGBT issues then they lose support.

KontraS is an exception to the aversion to LGBT issues, however. In 2011, the organization started to run longer sessions devoted to LGBT rights within its "Human Rights School" program. With the help of the Q!FF, they organized screenings showcasing films that deal with alternative genders and sexualities. Both organizations were convinced that through film, topics like same-sex sexuality and transgenderism can be made more accessible to students. As part of their educational strategy, Q!FF decided to program only Indonesian LGBT-themed shorts so that the students would understand that homosexuality also exists in Indonesia and is not simply a "Western import." Most

students from rural areas were quite shocked by this insight. When I attended a screening in summer 2011, almost all of the participants stated that this was the first time they had ever watched films dealing with same-sex love. In the post-screening discussion, most students expressed concern about how homosexuality can be justified in Islam. Others voiced their discontent about people who come out and show their homosexuality in public. These reactions reflect the general belief in Indonesia that LGBT people are abnormal, sick, and sinful and that they should be ashamed of themselves (*malu*).

It is precisely the activism through films described here that characterizes the Q!FF and distinguishes it from the more straightforward political LGBT organizations, as John Badalu (2011) stresses:

> Maybe we have to be political in the end, but still we don't want to be like other NGOs. We want to do activism through film, through visuals. It is more like to learn from the films rather than to open a discussion directly or to do a demonstration, to parade in the street. It's not the kind of thing we would do.

This understanding of activism follows that of Hongwei Bao (2010, 182), who views queer film festivals as being at once cultural and political. In fact, Bao's application of the notion of assemblages to queer film festivals resembles what I understand as cultural activism, which is a combination of a subtle arts activism and straightforward political activism. But the assemblage of arts and politics can also be experienced as highly ambivalent, as new festival director Meninaputri Wismurti (2011) feels obliged to point out:

> Since the very beginning Q-munity has been founded for fun, so that people can just enjoy films. We didn't have any political agenda, we just wanted to share films ... We still tried to keep this kind of spirit until last year [2010]. Even though through this incident we began to realize that in some ways we have been very naive during all these years. We just wanna have fun. This is why I also joined Q-munity, because I didn't wanna join other LGBTIQ organizations. That's not where I belong. I am not into political things. And then we learnt along the way that we are actually very political, or that the issue is very political. But none of us has the political mentality, I guess. We are not activists. Actually this is a bit hard, because now we are in the transition moment. Now we have to realize – and we have to accept – that we actually *are* activists, that we *are* involved in politics in some way.

For Meninaputri it was the fun factor of being at the Q!FF that first attracted her to attend as a spectator. Soon, she applied as a volunteer, after which she became a core member of Q-munity and finally the new co-director of the festival. Following the fierce protests of 2010, the Q!FF had to rethink its self-defined role as a cultural event. The incident opened their eyes to the fact that running a festival in Indonesia that showcases alternative sexualities and genders is indeed a political act. Meninaputri uses the concept of "happy

activism" to describe the form of engagement that the Q!FF carried out prior to 2010. "Happy activism" has several meanings: first, it relies heavily on the fun factor of organizing the festival, which Meninaputri says she misses in the political activism of LGBT organizations. Second, it stands for an activism that promotes the happy and positive aspects of queer lives. In mainstream society, LGBT people are often seen as what Sarah Ahmed (2010) calls "affect aliens," whom she further describes as "those who are alienated by happiness." It is exactly this trope of "unhappy queers" and the general assumption that the lives of LGBT people are inevitably miserable that Meninaputri and the Q!FF team have endeavored to tackle with the concept of "happy activism."

Although the Q!FF has always emphasized its cultural role more than its political dimension, it cannot be denied that the festival has played an important part in the development of Indonesia's post-New Order LGBT rights movement.[106] In this sense, it differs greatly from most Western European and North American queer film festivals, which developed out of the gay liberation movement and have been more or less part of an activist agenda ever since (Rhyne 2007; de Valck & Loist 2009, 205; Loist 2013a). Ultimately, however, most of these festivals have been unable to resist the pressure of homonormativity and have gradually been fully absorbed by the "ecosystem specializing in LGBT film," that is, the queer film industry, with its own production initiatives and distribution companies (Rhyne 2007; Loist & Zielinski 2012, 52; Loist 2013a, 119). During this mainstreaming process many festivals developed into professional commercial enterprises, becoming less and less involved in activism (Loist & Zielinski 2012, 53). Whereas most queer film festivals in North America and Western Europe were depoliticized with increasing commercialization, in Indonesia it is the other way around: the Q!FF has become more political. In this sense, it resembles the model of festivals as political intervention that predominated in the United States during the 1970s and 1980s (Rhyne 2007; Loist 2013, 110f; Rich 2013, 33).

[106] John Badalu claims that two of the local LGBT organizations were directly inspired by the Q!FF. According to John, both Arus Pelangi and Our Voice were founded by devoted Q!FF visitors who were inspired by the festival movies to create a political activist group. There is no doubt about the important role the Q!FF plays within the LGBT rights movement in Indonesia, but I agree with Saskia Wieringa that its influence should not be exaggerated. What can be said for sure is that the Q!FF has mainly influenced gay activists and has had a much lesser impact, if any, on the lesbian activists of Ardhanary Institute or Institut Pelangi Perempuan.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have given a detailed account of the Q!FF in Indonesia, which adds to a growing body of literature on identity-based film festivals. It has been shown how the Q!FF's activist engagement is intended to achieve change through the exhibition of alternative movies, thereby challenging the heterosexual norm propagated by mainstream commercial media. The festival's program invariably includes several highly political films that the organizers hope will inspire viewers to engage with LGBT and/or human rights causes. In fact, some of the movies shown at the Q!FF have brought to the surface issues that were not previously talked about in Indonesia. In this sense, the Q!FF understands itself as a side-stream distribution channel (see Prakosa 2005, 3; van Heeren 2012, 74), where oppositional film consumption and film mediation practices can take place.

This chapter has also shown how the 2010 protests clearly generated a political momentum that fundamentally shifted the festival's self-understanding toward a more political stance. The broadening of the Q!FF's film activism beyond the realm of the festival space allowed for a "politics of coalition-building built on affinity" (Wieringa 2013). The newly formed alliance between the Q!FF and KontraS is one example of what affinity-based politics can look like in the Indonesian context. It also demonstrates how human rights organizations can successfully incorporate LGBT issues into their agendas and how the combination of political activism with the cultural approach of "activism through film" can be mutually beneficial not only in Indonesia but also throughout Southeast Asia, as John Badalu (2008) points out: "In Indonesia, the Q! Film Festival is a political tool to fight against homophobia. In Southeast Asia, it is an encouragement, it shows that this kind of event is possible and it can be a reference or example for other countries."

CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

This study has investigated the phenomenon of film activism in the context of democratization and Islamization in contemporary Indonesia. Focusing on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender cultural producers, it has sought to shed light on an aesthetic movement that has played an active part in the construction of the new Indonesian nation and society since the political reformation in 1998. The democratic opening in combination with the development of new video and media technologies made possible the emergence of marginalized voices, which had been suppressed and dominated by the New Order regime. For the new liberal actors, cinema has played an important role in promoting novel understandings of sexuality and gender and raising awareness about controversial issues like homosexuality and individual sexual rights. However, the advancement of a liberal understanding of sexuality and sexual citizenship has met with strong opposition from both the government and Islamic groups, who produce and disseminate heterosexist and homophobic discourses based on invented "Islamic values."

The purpose of the current study was to disrupt hegemonic notions of who and what counts as a political subject and act. I suggested that film activism creates inclusive political sites of resistance where meaning is made and where the oppressive heteronormative discourse can be subverted and reconfigured in liberatory ways. My goal was to increase understanding of how film activism can be both effective and empowering for LGBT people. By looking at queer cultural practices, namely the collaborative filmmaking of the *Anak-Anak Srikandi* project and the organization of the Q! Film Festival, as modes of critical engagement with dominant regimes, this study has challenged notions of LGBT activism, in the Western sense of the term, as manifested in acts of recognition such as gay pride marches and public demands for legal reforms. Within mainstream LGBT rights movements, the work by cultural producers such as those discussed in the preceding chapters may be deemed not sufficiently progressive or even redundant. But as I have tried to demonstrate, *Anak-Anak Srikandi* and the Q!FF were created not for other activists, but for people—normative and non-normative gendered and sexual subjects alike—who are not yet politicized but have the potential to become more politically aware through the consumption of queer films such as *Anak-Anak Srikandi* and through contact with likeminded people at the Q!FF. Or, to put it in Muñoz's (1999, 164) words, the film activism presented here "preaches to the not yet converted, and … should be acknowledged as frontline struggle and agitation."

Rethinking the political in such a way that we look at cultural practices as political interventions requires us to "recognize certain acts as acts of citizenship" and to demonstrate "that these acts produce subjects as citizens" (Isin 2009, 371). In this study, I have shown how the directors of *Anak-Anak Srikandi* and the Q!FF organizers enacted themselves as citizens by using film as a way to "struggle for the simple right of affirmative existence" (Schulman 1991, 4). LGBT rights are not acknowledged in Indonesia, and accordingly non-normative sexual and gendered subjects are not protected under the law. So, it is the claim to the right to an alternative way of being-in-the-world, or, to put it differently, the constitution of actors "as those with 'the right to claim rights'" (Isin 2009, 371), that makes subjects who do not possess rights into activist citizens.

Another aim of this research, especially with regard to the filmmaking process itself, was to disrupt hegemonic hierarchies and anthropological othering discourses in response to the ongoing crisis of representation. The methods of collaborative filmmaking and autoethnography, I suggested, challenge the power relations in ethnographic documentary and at the same time reposition the directors as co-producers of knowledge. In a similar way, the Q!FF organizers were considered not simply as informants but also, and moreover, as producers of "emic theory" (Boellstorff 2010). More generally, this practice-based investigation of film activism tried to answer the question of what the role and purpose of film and film festivals in society might be. With respect to *Anak-Anak Srikandi*, I addressed this question not only by focusing on the end product but also by considering the very practice of collaborative filmmaking. This allowed me to better understand the scope of intervention and the particular ways in which filmmaking and personal storytelling may be transformative.

The dissertation showed that the process of making *Anak-Anak Srikandi* was transformative on the individual level, empowering most of the collaborating directors. Indeed, the very production of queer autoethnographies can be seen as an important link in the social change chain. As Thajib and Juliastuti (2009, 27; emphasis in original) have demonstrated for other disenfranchised and marginalized people in Indonesia, "video produced by such communities is understood as the *beginning* of a process of self-empowerment, through which the medium is perceived to produce a process of interaction and education that can lead to real social transformation."

They further argue that media participation and personal storytelling are "crucial agendas to pursue," especially in the Indonesian context, "where people's experiences and memories of being used as objects of repression are still deeply inscribed" (ibid., 19).

The directors of *Anak-Anak Srikandi* engaged in what Schaffer (2008) calls a "reflexive practice of representation" by recognizing the ambivalences of visibility. They sought to tackle conventional stereotypes about women-who-love-women, but did so without falling into the trap of the positive image politics that are widespread among the new generation of Indonesian filmmakers (see Murtgah 2013, 16). Instead of being concerned with showing normative or, for that matter, homonormative images, the *Anak-Anak Srikandi* filmmakers questioned major Western concepts like identity, visibility, authenticity, and truth. In so doing, they populated the global queer cinema map with new representations, those of minority groups from the so-called Global South that have been largely excluded from the queer mainstream in North America and Europe.

With regard to the Q!FF, this research demonstrated how film activism works through the screening of alternative films, enabling community and alliance building based on affinity. But the example of the Q!FF also showed very plainly that involuntary or voluntary publicity for LGBT events may induce violent opposition from conservative groups. The FPI's moral outrage toward the Q!FF offered a unique ethnographic context in which to identify the limits of the visibility politics of sexual and gender minorities in contemporary Indonesia. Although the realization of a queer counterpublic seems far from possible at this moment in time, the film activism of the Q!FF at least makes transformative politics imaginable. The activist screen of *Anak-Anak Srikandi* and the activist space of the Q!FF are venues for disidentificatory performances that grant performers and audiences alike access to alternative and queer life-worlds that are both actual and utopian. Thus, the development of an "activist imaginary" (Marcus 1996) through the use of film provides a point of departure for a better future.

The present study makes a noteworthy contribution to a growing body of literature on contemporary Indonesian cinema by adding a cultural activism lens that provides one with a clearer picture of how a new generation of cultural producers engages in the ongoing process of nation-building. However, this work only considered actors whose class privilege gave them access to different channels of representation and did not include individuals from working-class backgrounds, who are afforded significantly fewer opportunities for self-representation. Attending to the class differences in local audience

receptions may prove a fertile field of further enquiry. As spectators and academics continue to engage with the film anthology, it might also be pertinent to explore how the autoethnographies facilitate dialogue or evoke tensions across constituencies. That the film is controversial is indicated by the written reviews of audience members, which began to appear on social media shortly after the Indonesian premiere of *Anak-Anak Srikandi* at the Goethe Institute in Jakarta on 6 May 2012. For example, Paramita Mohamad (2012), a foreign-educated and self-proclaimed "out and proud lesbian," and daughter of the famous Indonesian poet, playwright, and journalist Goenawan Mohamad, writes on her blog,

> It's hard for me to be engaged with all the stories in *Srikandi*. Firstly, there are so many shots or scenes that I find irrelevant and distracting—especially the pointless middle part where they show low-res videos about people talking in focus groups or interviews. Maybe those visuals were meant to be some sort of *mise-en-scène*, but I fail to see how they add to the story or the point they want to put forward. It's like the visuals are there because they are more about the directors expressing themselves, rather than inviting the viewers to be involved in the stories.

Perhaps Mohamad did not understand the purpose of these "low-res" scene because, coming from a protected, privileged, and highly educated background, she had likely never felt family pressure or fear of harassment? Certainly, artistic tastes differ and are highly class-based, as Pierre Bourdieu ([1979]1984) has argued in one of his best-known books, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Another Indonesian spectator had a totally different opinion on the film. On the social media network Facebook, she sent me the following message: "The movie *Children of Srikandi* yesterday was great and inspiring! The movie speaks to me a lot. It touched me, I shed some tears."

Other comments were more specific and addressed controversial scenes in individual episodes. For instance, in the Facebook discussion forum of Ardhanary Institute, a lesbian, bisexual, and transgender rights organization based in Jakarta, one woman took issue with Yulia Dwi Andriyanti's episode, *Edith's Jilbab*, especially the part where the director takes off her veil, posing the question of whether this meant that she had stopped believing in God and become an atheist? Some women also expressed concerns over the kiss in Stea Lim's short, *Deconstruction*, fearing that this particular scene might reinforce prejudices that lesbians are "perverts" and "only about lust and sex." These comments provide an interesting basis for further research into audience reactions and the reception of the anthology from an intersectional perspective. Such research would help one to assess more fully the implications of a film like *Anak-Anak Srikandi* beyond the interventions described in this work. More broadly, considerably more work is needed to determine

spectators' roles in cultural activism in order to better evaluate the wider impact of resistant cultural productions.

The extensive discussions about *Anak-Anak Srikandi* on social media networks show how these new communication tools are crucial to increasing the visibility of the film, which hints at a much broader field of possible future research and innovations in audiovisual anthropology practice. With Indonesia's development into a "social media nation" (Nugroho 2012)—Indonesians are among the world's biggest users of Facebook and Twitter[107]—researchers are increasingly interested in the extent to which social media can be used for political activism and social change, turning collective online engagement into offline movements (see, e.g., Nugroho 2011, 2012; Lim 2013). As I demonstrated in this work, film and video have become the dominant media through which middle-class urbanites embrace their new freedom of expression and to communicate and advance human rights and social justice issues in Indonesia. In recent years, human rights activists and organizations have increasingly attempted to make use of digital media, particularly social media, for their campaigns, as information and communication technologies (ICT) offer new forms of participation, content creation, knowledge circulation, and consumption (see also Lim 2011, 19f).

The new developments in digital media are also gradually being recognized in the field of audiovisual/media anthropology. In the latest comprehensive overview of the historical development of audiovisual anthropology and its many approaches, *Made to be Seen* (Banks & Ruby 2011), Sarah Pink explores how the discipline's practices have slowly changed in the light of new digital media and ICT. Despite the still rather scarce practical usage of new media technologies by anthropologists, there is an expanding field of "digital visual anthropology" that is "using collaborative methods, interactive hypermedia, and the Internet to produce ethically responsible texts that engage with the corporeality of vision, have activist ambitions, and might bridge the gap between written and visual academic anthropology" (Pink 2011b, 211).[108] Considerably more work will need to be done to determine how the convergence between audiovisual anthropology and new digital technologies can be productive for an applied and activist approach to media research,

[107] Indonesia is currently the fourth most-represented nation on Facebook (SocialBakers 2014) and the fifth most on Twitter (Semiocast 2012). Since the infrastructure for cable broadband access is still underdeveloped and Internet subscription is very expensive, most Indonesians access social media networks via their mobile phones (Lim 2011, 5).

[108] The heightened interest in digital media is also reflected in the foundation of the new sub-discipline "digital anthropology" (Miller & Horst 2012).

production, and distribution. In particular, the question of how digital media can enable significant interventions beyond the personal to the wider public merits further attetntion. Given the recent changes in the technology world, the recontextualization of ethnographic film from the offline to the online world is only a matter of time. I agree with Jay Ruby's (2008, 2011) claim that anthropological documentary, as we currently know it, won't be around much longer. I would not go so far as to deem this genre altogether obsolete, but I would suggest that anthropological documentary has to be thought of as appearing in different forms within a global, digital, web-connected framework. In my view, if the field is to be developed further, inspiration should be sought from the film industry, where new forms of storytelling across different platforms are currently being explored. One of these new forms that seems relevant to anthropological audiovisual research and knowledge production is transmedia or multiplatform storytelling.[109]

In this new era of "screen shifting," where audiences increasingly select media content on the platform of their choice (e.g. TV, laptop, smartphone, tablet) (Coutard 2011, 16), the expansion of linear documentaries from traditional distribution outlets to several (non-linear) online platforms is changing the relationship between spectators and media content. The inherently interactive qualities of transmedia storytelling present manifold possibilities for activism, offering new tools for awareness building and civic online engagement as part of a strategic social change campaign (see Clark & Abrash 2011).[110] Transmedia and cross-media approaches to storytelling "optimize immersion" (Gubbins 2011) and therefore function well as pedagogical and activist tools, as Lina Strivastava (2009) further explains:

> Transmedia activism is one of the best ways to have people connect to a cause, by exposing them to a variety of media properties over various distribution channels—which opens up avenues for dialogue and provides an audience an educational experience about workable solutions—and then working with the most creative and engaged audience segment to facilitate the creation of their own content that further explains the cause and inspires action around it.

[109] The concept of "transmedia storytelling" was introduced by Henry Jenkins (2006) to denote the creation of distinct stories that are then distributed across multiple media platforms.

[110] To date there has been little research conducted on the real impact of multiplatform activist social media projects. However, one often-cited success in terms of civic participation and engagement is the "It Gets Better Project" (www.itgetsbetter.org), initiated in 2010 by a gay couple in reaction to a series of suicides among LGBT teenagers in the United States. They posted a video on YouTube in which they said positive things about their lives in order to give hope to LGBT youth faced with bullying. People are invited to share their messages of support via video or text on the project's website. Within a short time, the project built a huge community of it-gets-better advocates.

The convergence of the Internet and the documentary field may prove particularly interesting for audiovisual anthropologists, as it has the potential to powerfully extend Jean Rouch's foundational collaborative methodology of a "shared anthropology," enhancing participation and collaboration online. By integrating audiovisual representations across different media platforms, from social media networks to interactive websites, anthropologists have the chance to enter into an even more equal partnership with their collaborators, who may in turn provide us with richer knowledge. For example, in regard to *Anak-Anak Srikandi*, the film's impact could be enhanced through the creation of an interactive, resource-rich website or platform inviting others to upload their stories—via video, audio, images, or writing—of same-sex love, gender transgression, and experiences of exclusion or success.[111] The offline screenings of *Anak-Anak Srikandi* within different LGBT communities in Indonesia would then be used to spark debate and encourage others to share their stories online, creating a virtual community. In this way, the self-contained film anthology could be expanded through digital media tools, eventually creating a "radically collaborative open-ended ethnography" online (Wesch, cited in Pink 2011, 228). Certainly, with the application of new digital media and ICT to the genre of anthropological documentary, sociopolitical intervention can go beyond the limited possibilities seen so far.

It goes without saying that social media and the Internet have no intrinsic properties that automatically lead to social and political change. These new communication and participatory content creation technologies must be properly strategized and integrated with offline events and traditional media in order to be effective tools in social justice and equal rights campaigns (Nugroho 2012; Lim 2013). Thus, identifying and studying the social, political, and cultural structures and conditions under which online video and social media activism may lead to successful street and political activism is absolutely necessary (Lim 2012). Another crucial factor is paying attention to voice and listening. What wider impact can collaborative projects such as *Anak-Anak Srikandi* have if the voices of the directors are not recognized and valued?

What is often lacking from mainstream political activism (and the public in general) is the ability among activists to listen to other people's experiences and to do so without being judgmental. As Bickford (1996, 3) has reminded us, not listening is also a form of oppression. Gayatri Spivak (1990, 59) called attention to this problem over two decades

ago when she opined that "'Who should speak?' is less crucial than 'Who will listen?'" I wholeheartedly concur with renewed calls for greater attention to be given to active listening in production and analyses of media (see, e.g. Couldry 2009; Dreher 2009; Tacchi 2012). Members of dominant groups need not only to learn to listen or to listen more carefully, but also to engage in autocritique. At times this can be painful and embarrassing, as I myself experienced during research for this work, but self-reflection and sensitivity toward others are essential preconditions for building more just communities. I therefore encourage everybody committed to social justice to be more sensitive to the differences within and across groups and to the injuries we may cause, unintentionally or not, through our behavior and practices. We need to listen and be accountable to one another if we want political movements to be successful.

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Zielinski, G. (2008). *Furtive, Steady Glances: On the Cultural Politics of Lesbian and Gay Film Festivals*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Montreal: McGill University, Department of Art History and Communication Studies.

Zielinski, G. (2009). Queer Film Festivals. In J. C. Hawley & E. S. Nelson (eds.), *LGBTQ America Today: An Encyclopedia* (pp. 980-984). Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press.

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FILMOGRAPHY

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Acceptance (short episode in *Anak-Anak Srikandi,* dir. Oji, 2012).

Ada Apa dengan Cinta (What's up with Love, dir. Rudy Soedjarwo, 2002).

Anak-Anak Srikandi (Children of Srikandi, dir. Children of Srikandi Collective, 2012).

*Arisan! (*The Gathering, dir. Nia Dinata, 2003).

*Bendera (*The Flag, dir. Nan Achnas, 2002).

Berbagi Suami (Love for Share, dir. Nia Dinata, 2006).

Bulan Tertusuk Ilalang (And the Moon Dances, dir. Garin Nugroho, 1995).

Caravaggio (dir. Derek Jarman, 1986).

Catatan Si Boy III (Boy's Diary III, dir. Nasry Cheppy, 1990).

Chronique d'un Été (Chronicle of a Summer, dir. Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, 1961).

Detik Terhakir (Final Second*,* dir. Nanang Istiabudi, 2005).

Deconstruction (short episode in *Anak-Anak Srikandi,* dir. Stea Lim, 2012).

Edith's Jilbab (short episode in *Anak-Anak Srikandi,* dir. Yulia Dwi Andriyanti, 2012).

Edward II (dir. Derek Jarman, 1991).

Eksul (Extra Curricular, dir. Nayato Fio Nuala, 2006).

Eliana Eliana (dir. Riri Riza, 2002).

Gadis Metropolis (Metropolitan Girls*,* dir. Slamet Riyadi, 1993).

Gadis Metropolis II (Metropolitan Girls II, dir. Bobby Sandy, 1994).

Hello World! (short episode in *Anak-Anak Srikandi*, dir. Imelda Taurinamandala, 2012).

In Between (short episode in *Anak-Anak Srikandi,* dir. Hera Danish, 2012).

Istana Kecantikan (Palace of Beauty, dir. Wahyu Sihombing, 1988).

Jaguar (dir. Jean Rouch, 1967).

Jang Djatuh Dikaki Lelaki (Those Who Fall at Men's Feet, dir. Nico Pelamonia, 1971).

Janji Joni (Joni's Promise, dir. Joko Anwar 2005).

Jelangkung (dir. Rizal Mantovani, 2001).

Jlamprong (short episode in *Anak-Anak Srikandi,* dir. Eggie Dian, 2012).

Johan (dir. Philippe Vallois, 1976).

Kartini Bernyawa 9 (9 Lives of a Woman, dir. Ucu Agustin, 2007).

Kematian di Jakarta (Death in Jakarta, dir. Ucu Agustin, 2006).

Kuldesak (Cul-de-Sac, dir. Nan Triveni Achnas, Mira Lesmana, Rizal Mantovani, Riri Riza, 1998).

Les Maîtres Fous (The Mad Masters, dir. Jean Rouch, 1955).

Minggu Pagi di Victoria Park (Sunday Morning in Victoria Park, dir. Lola Amaria, 2010).

Moir, Un Noir (Me, a Black, dir. Jean Rouch, 1958).

Nanook of the North (dir. Robert Flaherty, 1922).

No Label (short episode in *Anak-Anak Srikandi,* dir. Afank Mariani, 2012).

Penumpasan Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI (dir. Arifin C. Noer, 1982).

Perawan-Perawan (Virgins, dir. Ida Farida, 1981).

Pergaulan Metropolis (Metropolitan Relationships, dir. Acok Rahman, 1994).

Petualangan Sherina (The Adventure of Sherina, dir. Riri Riza, 2000).

Pulp Fiction (dir. Quentin Tarantino, 1994).

R.S.V.P. (dir. Laurie Lynd, 1991).

Sanubari Jakarta (Jakarta Deep Down, dir. Billy Christian, Aline Jusria, Tika Pramesti, Lola Amaria, Kirana Larasati, Alfrits John Robert, Adriyanto Dewo, Dinda Kanyadewi, Fira Sofiana, Sim F, 2012).

Sebuah Pertanyaan untuk Cinta (A Question of Love, dir. Enison Sinaro, 2000).

Swoon (dir. Tom Kalin, 1992).

Taxi Driver (dir. Martin Scorsese, 1976).

The Act of Killing (dir. Joshua Oppenheimer, 2012).

The Living End (dir. Gregg Araki, 1992).

Tiada Maaf Bagimu (There's No Forgiveness for You, dir. M Sharieffudin, 1971).

Titian Serambut Dibelah Tujuh (The Narrow Bridge, dir. Chaerul Umam, 1982).

Titik Hitam (Black Dot, dir. Sentot Sahid, 2002).

CURRICULUM VITAE

Laura Coppens

*23.12.1980 in Berlin (Germany)
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CURRENT POSITIONS

08/2014 -	Research Assistant and Lecturer in Social Anthropology with a focus in Media Anthropology, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

PREVIOUS APPOINTMENTS

08/2008-09/2009	Research Assistant, Lecturer and Study Program Coordinator for the *MA Media and Visual Anthropology* at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Freie Universität Berlin (Germany)

EDUCATION

09/2014	Dissertation submitted, Social Anthropology, University of Zurich (Switzerland) *summa cum laude* (highest distinction)
10/2012-11/2013	Research Fellow, Center for Media, Culture and History at New York University (USA), invited by Prof. Dr. Faye Ginsburg
09/2009-8/2012	PhD candidate at the University Research Priority Program "Asia and Europe," University of Zurich (Switzerland)
01/2008	Magistra Artium (MPhil), Social Anthropology, Latin American Studies, Sociology at the Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology, Freie Universität Berlin (Germany), Grade 1,1 (equivalent to 1st grade)
07/-12/2004	Study Abroad Program (DAAD), University of Melbourne (Australia)

LANGUAGES

German (native); English (fluent); Spanish (very good); French (intermediate); Portuguese (intermediate); Indonesian (basic)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Audio-visual and media anthropology; indigenous media; film festival studies; Southeast Asian cinema; documentary storytelling; sensory ethnography; existential anthropology; labor and work; urban studies; social movements; utopia and hope; gender and queer theory; feminist theory and research; Australia; Indonesia; USA; Cuba; France and the Mediterranean

PROFESSIONAL ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES AND SERVICE

11/2012 -	Film Review Editor, *Visual Anthropology Review*

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

2012 - 2013	Dissertation Finishing Grant from the Foundation Stiefel-Zangger and the Swiss National Science Foundation
2013	SAGW Traveling Grant for the 17th World Congress of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Manchester (UK)
2013	Jury Award "Best Documentary" for *Children of Srikandi* at Identities Queer Film Festival (Austria)
2013	Diversity and Human Rights Award for *Children of Srikandi* at Zinegoak: International GLT Film and Performing Arts Festival (Spain)
2012	Nomination of *Children of Srikandi* for the Teddy Award and the Amnesty International Human Rights Award at the Berlin International Film Festival (Germany)
2012	SAGW Traveling Grant for the 111th American Anthropology Association Conference in San Francisco (USA)
2012	Grant for a "Short Term Mentorship Abroad" at Harvard University as part of the federal programme of gender equity, University of Zurich
2011	Traveling Grant from the University of Zurich for the 110th American Anthropology Association Conference in Montreal (Canada)
2010	Traveling Grant from the University of Zurich for the 109th American Anthropology Association Conference in New Orleans (USA)
2010	Traveling Grant from the University of Zurich for the Conference "Transcultural Bodies-Transboundary Biographies" in New Delhi (India)
2009	Traveling Grant of the University of Zurich for the First International Graduate Conference in Yogyakarta (Indonesia)
2009-2012	3-year PhD Scholarship, University Priority Research Program "Asia and Europe," University of Zurich (Switzerland)
2009	DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) grant for participation in the 16th IUAES (International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences) World Congress in Kunming (China)
2004	DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) Study Abroad Grant for studying at the University of Melbourne (Australia)
2003	Grant for a filmmaking workshop with Judith and David MacDougall at the Centre for Cross Cultural Research (CCR), Australian National University (Australia)

WORK EXPERIENCE (Academic and Non-Academic)

05/2015 -	Jury member 10th Xposed Queer Experimental Film Festival, Berlin
03/2015 -	Co-organizer and programmer for the Queersicht LGBT Film Festival, Bern
06/2013 -	Program Consultant for the PBS Documentary Program "POV: Documentaries with a Point of View, www.pbs.org/pov, New York
02/2013 -	Assistant Producer to Gabriel Baur and Line Producer in the Film Production Company *Onix Films,* www.onixfilms.com*,* Zurich
04-05/2013	Expert, Ponce Law Firm, Austin (USA) Wrote an expert report about the situation of homosexuals in Indonesia for an Indonesian asylum seeker
01/2011	Jury member 8th Zinegoak Bilbao International GLT Film Festival
02/2010	Jury member Teddy Award, 60th Berlin International Film Festival
09/2009	Jury member 11th Jakarta International Film Festival
10/2005-02/2009	Student Assistant at the Institute of Education and Psychology, Freie Universität Berlin (Prof. Dr. Christoph Wulf); Researched literature and images, copyedited and translated texts (from Spanish to German)
2008-2012	Director and co-organizer of the independent film festival *Asian Hot Shots Berlin*
12/2007-02/2008	Contract for Services, Development of Online Teaching Course "Indigenous Media" at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Freie Universität Berlin (Dr. Undine Frömming)
08/2007	Jury member 9th Cinemanila International Film Festival
10/2005-04/2007	Student Assistant, e-Tutor at at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Freie Universität Berlin (Prof. Dr. Ute Luig); co-designed and co-developed the blended learning *MA in Visual and Media Anthropology* (with Dr. Undine Frömming)
07-10/2003	Internship Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra (Australia); researched literature, assisted in the in the archival of audiovisual documents
02-06/2003	Internship Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin (Australia) Assisted in the online archiving of Aboriginal art, concept development of an exhibition and brochure design
2003-2006	Co-organizer and program coordinator of the Berlin-Asia Pacific Film Festival, Dreamtime Art & Music Festival, Ethnofilmfest Berlin (Germany)

10/2000-04/2001	Volunteer in non-profit ecological and educational project in the botanical garden in Pinar del Río (Cuba), organized by the Freundschaftsgesellschaft Berlin-Kuba e.V.; worked in ecological and agricultural projects, seeking botanical and Spanish classes
07-09/2000	Internship at the local newspaper Berliner Morgenpost with a focus in photojournalism; researched and wrote articles, conducted interviews, did portraiture photography and photo editing

WORKSHOP AND CONFERENCE ORGANISATION

11/2015	Conference Panel Co-Convenor (with Michaela Schäuble and Claire Vionnet), "Mediating Precariousness: Creative Ethnographic Practices in an Era of Crisis," Annual Conference of the Swiss Ethnological Society, 12-14 November 2015, University of Bern
11/2015	Conference Co-Organizer (with Michaela Schäuble and Tobias Haller), "Global Capitalism and the Challenge of Well-Being in the World", Annual Conference of the Swiss Ethnological Society, 12-14 November 2015, University of Bern
10/2015	Workshop Co-Convenor (with Michaela Schäuble, Martha Dietrich, Balz Alter) "Montage as Artistic, Cultural and Scientific Practice," Workshop of the Swiss Commission for Audiovisual Media, 15-23 October 2015, University of Zurich
06/2015	Summer School Organizer "Single Shot Cinema" with the Dutch filmmaker Leonard Retel Helmrich (with Michaela Schäuble), 8-12 June 2015, University of Bern and HKB,
03/2013	Workshop Co-Convenor (with Bettina Dennerlein) "Intersectionality Revisited," 5 May 2013, University of Zurich
08/2013	Conference Panel Co-Convenor (with Joceny Pinheiro and Metje Postma), "Ethnographic Films made by women about women: Is there a feminist visual Anthropology?," 17th IUAES (International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences) World Congress, 5-10 August 2013, University of Manchester
03/2012	Workshop Co-Convenor (with Justyna Jaguscia and Jessica Imbach) "Asian Postmodernities and their Legacies," 30-31 March 2012, University of Zurich

INVITED PAPERS AND FILM SCREENINGS

"The Subversive Potential of Drag: Performing Disidentification in the films *Anak-Anak Srikandi* and *Madame X,*" Workshop on Indonesian Cinema, SOAS, University of London, 3-4 October 2015

"Precarious Interactions: The challenges of collaboration in the anthropological film Anak-Anak Srikandi (Children of Srikandi)," Symposium "The Limits of Collaboration: Assessing Collaborative Research in Anthropology," University of St. Andrews, 9-12 September, 2015

Film Screening "Children of Srikandi" and lecture on LGBT rights in Indonesia at the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University, New York, 20 October 2013

"Fighting 'Moral Terrorism': The Islam Defenders Front vs. the Q! Film Festival," Religion in the Digital Age: Mediating "the Human" in a Globalizing Asia, Center for Religion and Media in collaboration with the Center for Media, Culture and History, New York University, 27-28 September 2013

"Cultural Subversion: Film, Activism, and Lesbian Subjectivity in Indonesia," Workshop "Intersectionality Revisited," University of Zurich, 5 May 2013

"Non-Hierarchical Pulling Together Beyond All Difficulties: Ethical Dilemmas in the Production of the Collaborative Film Project Children of Srikandi" at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco (USA), 14-18 November 2012

Film Screening "Children of Srikandi" at the Gender & Sexuality Film Festival, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, UC Berkeley, 25-27 November 2012

"Doc 2.0: Audiovisual Anthropology goes Transmedia – Die Zukunft des ethnologischen Dokumentarfilms im digitalen Zeitalter" in the session "Forschung mit der Kamera 2.0," Jahrestagung der Schweizerischen Ethnologischen Gesellschaft, University of Zurich, 25-26 November 2011

"Doc 2.0: Social Change through Film? The Potential of Documentary Film and New Media in Empowering LGTB Activism in Indonesia" in the panel "Documentary Futures" organized by the *Massachusetts Institute of Technology* at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Montréal (Canada), 16-20 November 2011

"Revenge of the Virgin - Female Ghosts in Indonesian Horror Films" at the International Workshop Ghosts in Asian Cinemas, University of Zurich, 4-6 November 2011

Workshop „Indonesian Minorities – Rights, Plights and Positions", Third Annual PhD Workshop organized by the Nordic Indonesia Studies Network, University of Copenhagen, 22-24 September 2011

"Social Change Through Film? The Potential of Documentary in Empowering LGBT Activism in Indonesia" at the workshop "Media and Politics in Asia and Europe," Institute for Mass Communication and Media Research, University of Zurich, 19 April 2011

"Representing the Queer Other in Ethnographic Film: An experimental approach to queer women's emotional and sensory experiences in Indonesia" in the panel "Perception, Production and Circulation: Sensory Ethnography through Media" organized by the Sensory Ethnography Lab, Harvard University at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, 17-21 November 2010

"Representing the 'Queer Other' in Ethnographic Film: An Experimental Approach to Intersectionality and Identity Politics of LBT women in Jakarta" at the 6th Schweizerische Nachwuchstagung der Asienwissenschaften, Monte Vérita, 2-5 May 2010

"Lesbians in Jakarta: The Production and Representation of Queer Subjectivities within Transnational Circuits of Queer Knowledge" at the International Symposium "Transcultural Bodies – Transboundary Biographies," Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts, New Delhi (India), 21-24 February 2010

"Being Chinese Indonesian - Feeling out of Place in One's Own Country. Ethnizität, Identität und Gender in Edwin's Film 'Blind Pig Who Wants to Fly'" at the Symposium "Identitäten in Bewegung – Migration im Film, University of Zurich, 8-9 January 2010

„Films of Desire: Queer(ing) Indonesian Films: The portrayal of queer characters in Indonesian films and perspectives after the implementation of the anti-pornography law" at the First International Graduate Students Conference on Indonesia "(Re)Considering Contemporary Indonesia: Striving for Democracy, Sustainability, and Prosperity, A Multidisciplinary Perspective", Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, 1-4 December 2009

'Beyond the Audiovisual: Representing (Other) Sensory Experiences in Ethnographic Film" in the panel "Towards an Epistemology of Media in Ethnographic Film and Multimedia Productions" at the 16th IUAES (International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences) World Congress, Kunming (China), 27-31 June 2009

TEACHING EXPERIENCE (Undergraduate in German)

FS 2015	Anthropologische Perspektiven zu Sexualität, Körper und Geschlecht, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern (Switzerland)
HS 2014	Indigene Medien: Selbstrepräsentation und kultureller Aktivismus, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern (Switzerland)
HS 2011	Indonesisches Kino, Braunschweig University of Arts (Germany)
FS 2011	Student Excursion to Indonesia, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Zurich (Switzerland)
FS 2011	Queer Anthropology: Geschlecht und Sexualität am Beispiel Indonesien, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Zurich (Switzerland)
FS 2010	Film als Ethnographie – Neues unabhängiges Kino in Indonesien, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Zurich (Switzerland)
SS 2010	Visual and Media Anthropology: DocMatrix, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Freie Universität Berlin (Germany)
WS 08/09	Online Course "Indigenous Media," Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Freie Universität Berlin (Germany)
SS 2008	Neues unabhängiges Kino aus Südostasien - Cinema at the borders, Instiute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Freie Universität Berlin (Germany)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS

EASA - European Association of Social Anthropologists

Visual Anthropology Network of EASA

SEG - Swiss Ethnological Society

SEG Commission for Audiovisual Media